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# **Special Operations Forces Language and Culture Needs Assessment Project: Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ability to communicate in another language is an important skill for Special Operation Forces (SOF) mission success (USSOCOM M 350-8, 2009). Motivation is often the key to learning and maintaining trained skills (Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000). Therefore, without sufficient motivation, it is unlikely that SOF operators will seek out learning opportunities or engage in language learning behaviors. One effective tool SOF personnel have suggested to motivate language learning is money.

*“Money is the greatest motivator we have, so the more money you funnel...the more people are apt to get proficient”*

SOF Operator, Naval Special Warfare Command (WARCOM)

Empirical research has demonstrated the effectiveness of monetary reward programs in motivating trainees (e.g., Lawler, 1990; Ledford & Heneman, 2000; Wilson, 1994). Research with Army SOF operators demonstrated skill-based pay for language (i.e., Foreign Language Proficiency Pay; FLPP) does have a positive impact on acquisition and maintenance of language proficiency over time (Dierdorff & Surface, 2008).

In 2007, the Department of Defense (DoD) replaced FLPP with the current bonus program to more closely align incentives with requirements. The DoD developed the Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB) program as a competency-based or pay-for-skill incentive to motivate military personnel to attain and maintain foreign language proficiency. Using this program, military personnel who achieve certain levels of proficiency in foreign languages are allotted a monetary incentive (DoDI 7280.3). Although the DoD Instruction sets guidelines for the bonus program, the Services have some latitude to make policy changes to optimize the incentive for their personnel. This report presents the views of SOF operators and leaders on the current FLPB policy.

The first step for achieving an effective incentive system is to make sure the targeted group is aware of it. According to survey results, almost all SOF operators (97%) were aware of FLPB. However, few operators actually receive FLPB. Unit leaders estimated that less than 10% of their unit was currently receiving FLPB, while only 20% of operators indicated that they were currently receiving FLPB. Since so few SOF personnel reported the receipt of FLPB, it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of this program for motivating personnel.

Results about the extent FLPB is perceived to motivate language skills ranged widely across the SOF community. Overall, most operators indicated that FLPB was at least *moderately motivating* to *very motivating*, and only 17% indicated FLPB was *not motivating*. Much of the motivation variation can be accounted for by group differences. Specifically, those who were currently in training, those who were studying less difficult to learn languages, and those who were currently receiving FLPB were the most motivated by FLPB. One SOF operator described,

*“FLPB has motivated many soldiers to maintain their language proficiency because they don't want to lose the pay.”*

SOF Operator, 4<sup>th</sup> Psychological Operations Group (POG)

Previous research has indicated that motivation to learn is linked to perceptions of procedural justice (fairness in procedures; e.g., Zapata-Phelan, Colquitt, Scott, & Livingston, 2009). Thus, to further investigate FLPB as a motivator, perceptions of fairness were assessed. According to the results, almost half (49%) of SOF operators perceived FLPB allocation procedures as *neither fair nor unfair*. Similarly, the procedures for determining the proficiency level required for pay were rated as *neither fair nor unfair* by 46% of operators. Most of these operators also indicated that they currently did not receive FLPB. Those currently receiving FLPB and studying less difficult to learn languages perceive the procedures to be fairer. Leaders, on the other hand, displayed more positive attitudes regarding FLPB fairness. Leaders most frequently indicated that FLPB allocation procedures (32%) and procedures for determining the required proficiency level (28%) were *fair*.

Despite the mostly positive attitudes toward FLPB (i.e., “*I think the current incentives are good*” – 5<sup>th</sup> SFG operator), very few operators received FLPB, which suggests that FLPB may not be an effective motivator. Therefore, suggestions on how to increase FLPB’s motivating potential were gathered from both SOF operators and leaders. Overall, most SOF operators and leaders made recommendations for changes to the FLPB pay structure. Specifically, the most frequent suggestion was to increase the amount of pay SOF personnel receive for acquiring and maintaining language. Both SOF operators and leaders indicated that the FLPB payment amount should adequately reflect the amount of work it takes to achieve the required language proficiency. Many respondents compared the level of effort needed to acquire language skills to the amount of work required to qualify for other skill-for-pay programs.

*“Language skill requires considerable time and effort, yet is slightly more than demo pay or jump pay (effortless, low skill tasks) and less than other special pays”*

Unit Leader, 5<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (SFG)

Thus, by increasing the amount of FLPB to an amount perceived to be equal to the work, motivation to engage in the task should increase.

Another pay structure change suggested by both SOF operators and leaders is to lower the level of proficiency required to receive FLPB. This suggestion came mostly from Army SOF personnel who currently can receive FLPB for scoring Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) level 2 in two language skill modalities. Most of these respondents suggested initiating FLPB at ILR level 1. Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) and Marines Corps Forces Special Operations Command (MARSOC) personnel can currently receive FLPB at ILR level 1 because of their Services’ policies. Lowering the proficiency level for the receipt of FLPB should provide motivation to maintain skill at ILR level 1 and provide a ladder to higher levels of attainment.

*“Award it for lower levels of proficiency at a reduced rate.”*

Unit Leader, 95<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Brigade (CAB)

SOF personnel also commonly suggested four other ways to increase operator motivation with FLPB:

The first suggestion was to increase the time allowed for language training, or increase the amount of opportunities for language training. If the tools and training were provided for acquiring or maintaining proficiency, then operators could more easily work towards achieving their proficiency goals. However, the main constraint is time to focus on language training. Deployments and other training requirements leave limited time for language training once personnel leave initial acquisition training (IAT).

The second suggestion was to change the qualification test for FLPB to focus on other language proficiency modalities (i.e., speaking, reading, listening, and writing). Operators indicated that the test used to qualify for FLPB (i.e., primarily the Defense Language Proficiency Test, DLPT, which measures reading and non-participatory listening) does not measure the skills they focus on for mission success (i.e., speaking and participatory listening), and would like the option to qualify for FLPB with tests focusing on those needed modalities. The Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) was mentioned as an alternative. The dual-modality OPI (speaking and participatory listening) has been adopted at the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) and other locations in SOF. As this test proliferates, this issue should be addressed.

The third suggestion to increase the motivation of FLPB was to increase the amount of command emphasis on language. Operators and leaders described a lack of emphasis on language training, and indicated that if emphasis were to increase, there would be more time and training provided to meet proficiency goals. See *Command Support for Language: Grading the Chain of Command* (Technical Report # 2010011006) for a more complete analysis of command emphasis for language in the SOF community.

The fourth suggestion was to simplify the administrative processes. Some of the operators indicated that paperwork and test scheduling is complicated and that if the process were simplified, more operators would be more motivated to pursue FLPB qualification.

Considering all these suggestions provided by the community for motivational improvements in FLPB, changing the policy should increase the number of operators who achieve and maintain foreign language proficiency across the SOF community. This report documents perceptions of the FLPB program, including the motivational qualities, perceptions of fairness, and SOF community recommendations for improvement in more detail than the executive summary.

See Appendix A of this report for additional details about the SOF LCNA Project. For questions or more information about the Special Operations Forces Language Office (SOFLO) and this project, please contact Mr. Jack Donnelly ([john.donnelly@socom.mil](mailto:john.donnelly@socom.mil)). For specific questions related to data collection or reports associated with this project, please contact Dr. Eric A. Surface ([esurface@swa-consulting.com](mailto:esurface@swa-consulting.com)) or Dr. Reanna Poncheri Harman ([rpharman@swa-consulting.com](mailto:rpharman@swa-consulting.com)) with SWA Consulting Inc.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>SECTION I: REPORT AND PROJECT OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>SECTION II: AWARENESS AND RECEIPT OF FLPB.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>SECTION III: EFFECTIVENESS OF FLPB .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>SECTION IV: FAIRNESS OF FLPB PROCEDURES .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>SECTION V: SOF COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>SECTION VI: CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>ABOUT SWA CONSULTING INC. ....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: ABOUT THE LCNA PROJECT .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>APPENDIX C. AWARENESS AND RECEIPT OF FLPB.....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>APPENDIX D: MOTIVATION AND EFFECTIVENESS TABLES .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>APPENDIX E: FAIRNESS TABLES .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>APPENDIX F: OPEN-ENDED COMMENT THEME DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES .....</b>	<b>55</b>

## SECTION I: REPORT AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

### ***Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus Report Purpose***

Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB) is a skill-based pay (SBP) program designed to increase language capability across the Department of Defense (DoD; DoDI 7280.3). SBP programs have been shown to increase language proficiency in the SOF (Special Operations Forces) community (Dierdorff & Surface, 2008). This report documents the perceptions of operators and leaders regarding the effectiveness of FLPB and their suggestions for making FLPB more effective.

Current DoD policy states that service members need to achieve a proficiency rating of a 2 or more on the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR) scale for 2 out of 3 modalities (i.e., reading, listening, speaking; DoDI 7280.3). However, since the DoD Instruction allows for the Services to modify certain requirements to qualify for the bonus, specific FLPB policies for SOF operators vary across SOF components (i.e., United States Army Special Operations Command – USASOC; Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command – MARSOC; Air Force Special Operations Command – AFSOC; Naval Special Warfare Command – NAVSPECWARCOM or WARCOM), reflecting the language strategy and policy of the component’s mother Service. For example, some Services have chosen to pay FLPB at lower levels of proficiency. FLPB rates vary based on strategic need, language difficulty, and proficiency level.

This report documents perceptions of the FLPB program, including the motivational qualities, perceptions of fairness, and SOF community recommendations for improvement. Section II provides findings related to awareness and the receipt of FLPB. Section III presents perceptions of the motivating qualities of FLPB. Section IV examines the perceptions of FLPB procedure fairness. Section V reports suggestions from SOF operators and leaders for making FLPB more motivating. Section VI provides conclusions based on the findings presented in Sections II-IV of the report. Appendix A provides information about the LCNA project. Appendix B includes the methodology for this report. Appendix C-E provides detailed data from respondents in table format. Appendix F provides themes and sample comments from respondents.

### **LCNA Project Purpose**

The Special Operations Forces Language Office (SOFLO) commissioned the *2009 SOF LCNA Project* to gain insights on language and culture capability and issues across the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). The goal of this organizational-level needs assessment is to inform strategy and policy to ensure SOF personnel have the language and culture skills needed to conduct their missions effectively. Data were collected between March and November, 2009 from personnel in the SOF community, including operators and leaders. Findings, gathered via focus groups and a web-based survey, will be presented in a series of reports divided into three tiers. The specific reports in each of these tiers will be determined and contracted by the SOFLO. *Tier I* reports focus on specific, limited issues (e.g., *Inside AOR Use of Language*). *Tier II* reports integrate and present the most important findings across related *Tier I* reports (e.g., *Use of Language and Culture on Deployment*) while including additional data and analysis on the topic. One *Tier III* report presents the most important findings,

implications, and recommendations across all topics explored in this project. The remaining *Tier III* reports present findings for specific SOF organizations [e.g., Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), Special Forces (SF) Command]. Two foundational reports document the methodology and participants associated with this project. Report topics are determined by the SOFLO and are subject to change.

### **Relationship of *Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus* to the LCNA Project**

Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus is a *Tier I* report. Findings from this report will be integrated with the following *Tier I* reports: *Non-monetary Incentives*, *Barriers to Language Acquisition and Maintenance*, and *Force Motivation for Language* into the *Tier II* report *Incentives/Barriers* (see Appendix A for the project structure). However, the final reports produced will be determined by the SOFLO and are subject to change.



## SECTION II: AWARENESS AND RECEIPT OF FLPB

This section documents the number of SOF operators and leaders<sup>1</sup> who reported awareness of FLPB as well as current receipt of FLPB.

### Research Questions

This section addresses the following questions:

- Is the SOF community aware of the FLPB program?
- Who currently receives FLPB?
- What factors affect the likelihood of whether or not operators receive FLPB?

### Main Findings

Of those who participated, almost all SOF operators (97%) indicated that they were aware of the FLPB program; however, results show that only 20% of operators who were aware of the program reported receiving the bonus. Differences were found in the number of operators who reported currently receiving FLPB between components, Army SOF types, USASOC units, and the difficulty levels of the operators' assigned languages. Between components, USASOC had the lowest percentage of operators receiving FLPB, while MARSOC had the highest. This difference likely reflects differences in the US Army and US Marine Corps FLPB policies. Between Army SOF types, Special Forces (SF) had the lowest percentage of operators receiving FLPB compared to Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) groups. At the USASOC unit level, 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group (SFG) had the highest percentage of operators receiving FLPB, with 37% indicating current receipt of the bonus. The final difference was related to the difficulty level of learning the operator's assigned language. In general, operators assigned to less difficult languages reported receiving FLPB at higher levels. Operators in Category IV languages (most difficult, e.g., Arabic) reported receiving FLPB less often than those who studied languages in the other categories.

Leaders who participated were asked to report the percentage of their unit that receives FLPB. Most leaders (42%) indicated that less than 10% of operators in their unit receive FLPB. Leaders were also asked if they have ever received FLPB, and 29% indicated they have received FLPB at some point in their career. Of those 29%, a slight majority (55%) reported currently receiving FLPB.

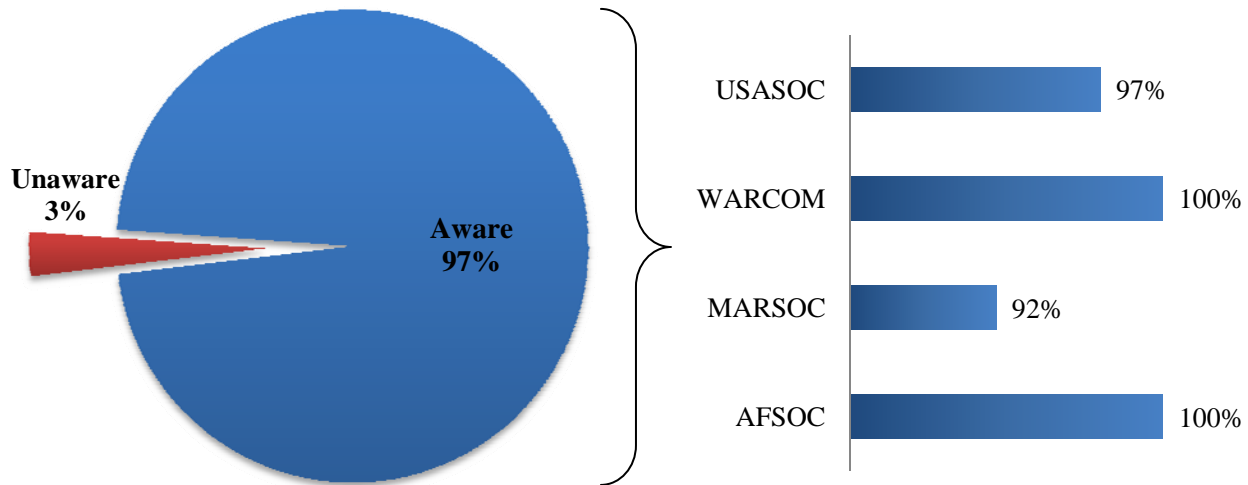
### Detailed Findings

#### *Awareness of FLPB*

Across the SOF community, most operators (97%,  $n = 1,017$ ) were aware that they can get paid for foreign language proficiency (Figure 1, p. 9).

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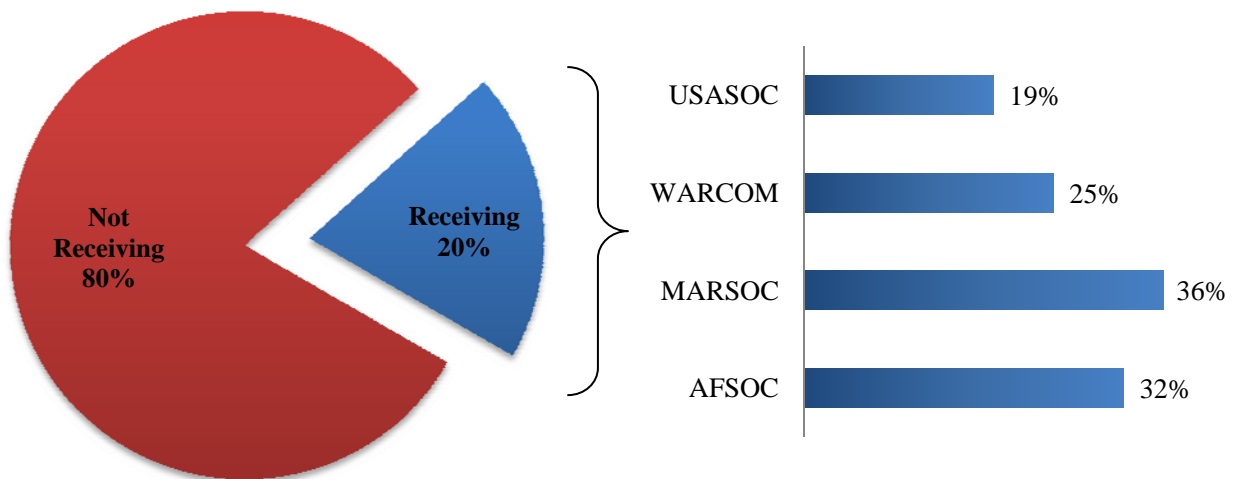
<sup>1</sup> When referring to SOF operators and leaders, this report focuses only on the operators and leaders who participated in the survey and responded to these specific items. Please see Appendix B (Methodology) and the *Participation Report* (Technical Report #2010011003) for more information about survey respondents.

*Figure 1. Operator awareness of FLPB*

*Note.* Sample sizes and frequencies are presented in Appendix C.

#### *Operator Receipt of FLPB*

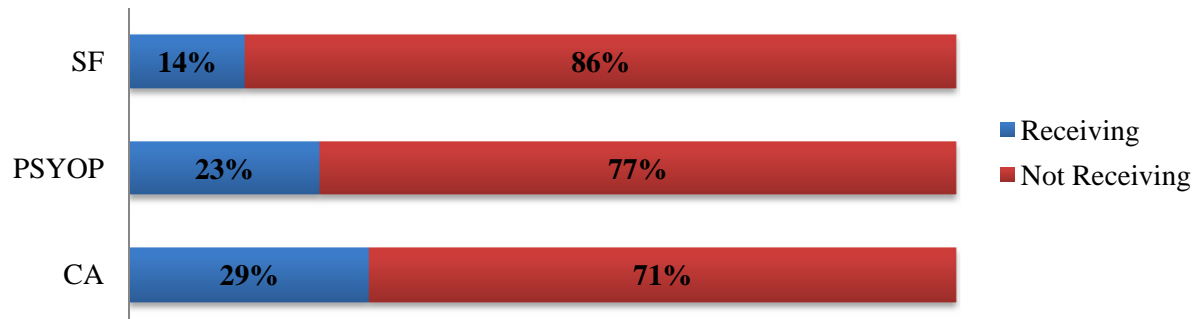
Operators who indicated that they were aware of FLPB were asked if they currently receive FLPB. Only 20% ( $n = 197$ ) of SOF operators aware of FLPB reported that they currently received it (Figure 2, p. 9). Looking across components, USASOC (19%,  $n = 139$ ) had the smallest proportion of responding operators receiving FLPB, and MARSOC had the most (36%,  $n = 4$ ). It should be noted that personnel at AFSOC and MARSOC receive FLPB at a lower level of proficiency because of US Air Force and US Marine Corps FLPB policies.

*Figure 2. Operator current receipt of FLPB overall and by component*

*Note.* Sample sizes and frequencies are presented in Appendix C.

When considering Army SOF type, SF (14%,  $n = 66$ ) operators were less likely to receive FLPB than CA (29%,  $n = 43$ ) and PSYOP (23%,  $n = 28$ ) operators (Figure 3, p. 10).

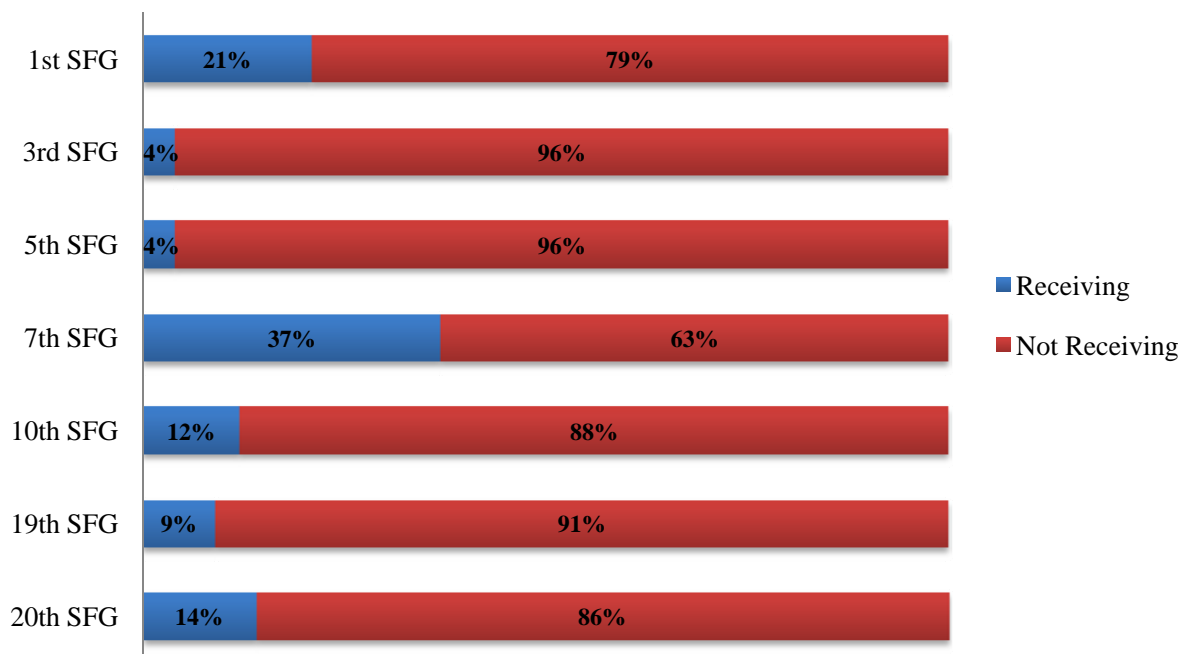
Figure 3. Operator current receipt of FLPB by Army SOF type



Note. Sample sizes and frequencies are presented in Appendix C.

USASOC units differed in the percentage of personnel in each unit who reported receiving FLPB (Figure 4, p. 10). Operators in 7<sup>th</sup> SFG (37%,  $n = 31$ ) were most likely to receive FLPB. Operators in 3<sup>rd</sup> SFG (4%,  $n = 4$ ) and 5<sup>th</sup> SFG (4%,  $n = 5$ ) were least likely to receive FLPB. Differences between the USASOC units may be due to the difficulty of languages in each unit's assigned area of responsibility (AOR). For example, 7<sup>th</sup> SFG's AOR is South Command (SOUTHCOM) which includes mostly countries in which Spanish and other less difficult languages (i.e., Category I languages) are spoken, whereas 5<sup>th</sup> SFG is assigned to Central Command (CENTCOM) which includes countries in which more difficult languages are spoken (i.e., Arabic).

Figure 4. Operator current receipt of FLPB by USASOC unit

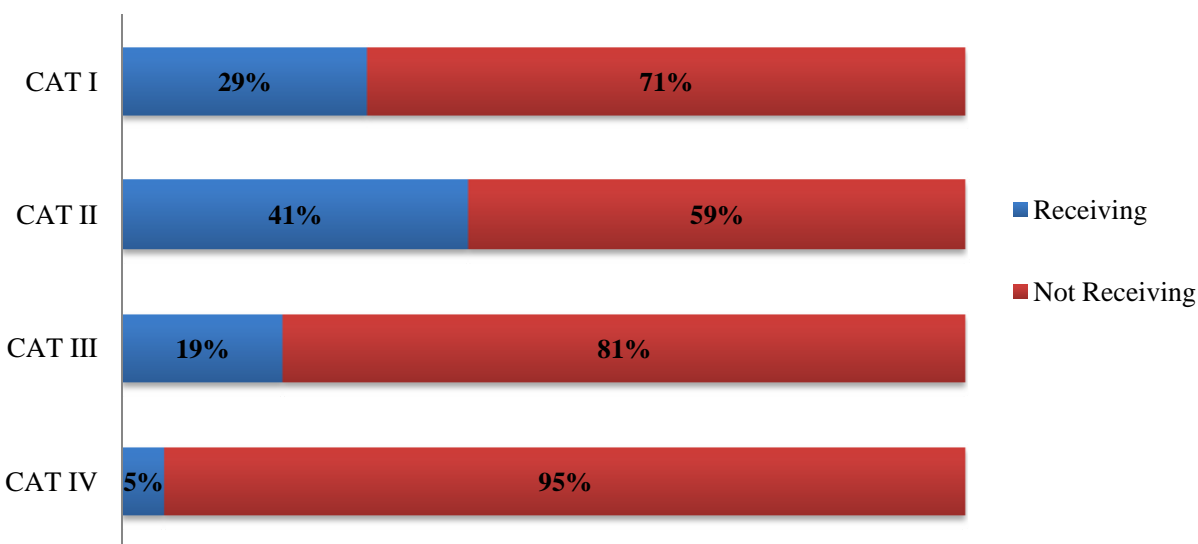


Note. Sample sizes and frequencies are presented in Appendix C.

To examine the possibility of language difficulty causing the differences in groups, the Department of Defense (DoD) language difficulty categories were examined. These categories describe the level of difficulty native English speakers have in achieving proficiency in the target language. There are four categories (CATs) of language difficulty ranging from CAT I languages as the least difficult for a native English speaker to learn (e.g., Spanish) to CAT IV as the most difficult for a native English speaker to learn (e.g., Arabic).

Language difficulty was found to relate to whether or not operators receive FLPB (Figure 5, p. 11). Operators assigned to CAT IV languages were much less likely to indicate that they receive FLPB (5%,  $n = 14$ ) compared to the other categories. For example, 29% of operators ( $n = 112$ ) assigned to CAT I languages reported receiving FLPB. Furthermore, operators with CAT II languages were more likely to indicate they receive FLPB (41%,  $n = 36$ ) compared to other categories. Of the operators receiving FLPB for a CAT II language, 70% studied Indonesian, and the remaining 30% studied German. Some experts suggest Indonesian is an “easier language to learn” compared to other CAT II languages (National Language Service Corps, 2008). This may explain the higher proportion of FLPB receipt at the CAT II level compared to the CAT I level.

Figure 5. Operator current receipt of FLPB by language difficulty

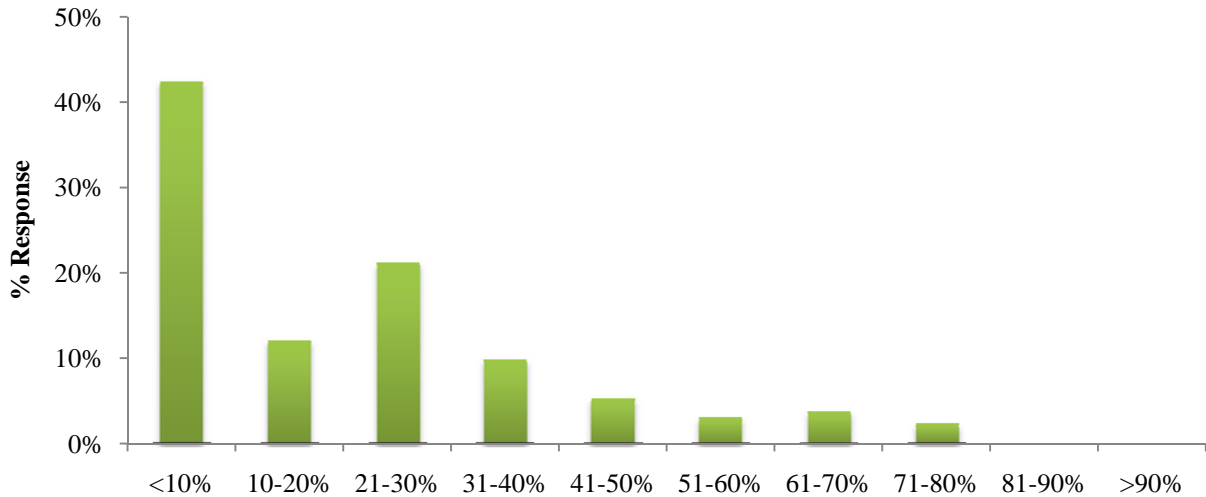


Note. Sample sizes and frequencies are presented in Appendix C.

#### *Unit Leader Perceptions of Operator Receipt of FLPB*

Unit leaders were asked to estimate how much of their unit was currently receiving FLPB. Most leaders (42%,  $n = 56$ ) reported that less than 10% of their unit currently received FLPB (Figure 6, p. 12).

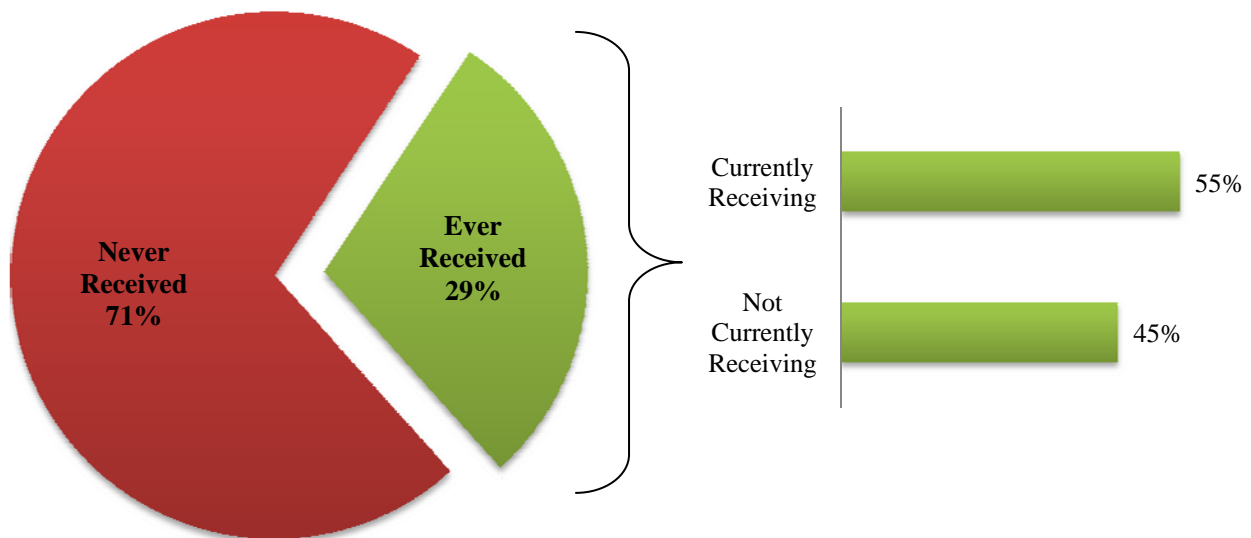
Figure 6. Leader perceptions of their unit's receipt of FLPB



#### Leader Receipt of FLPB

Unit leaders were also asked if they have *ever* received FLPB, and those that have received FLPB were further asked if they *currently* receive FLPB (Figure 7, p. 12). Twenty-nine percent ( $n = 225$ ) indicated they have received FLPB at some point in their career. Of those 29%, a slight majority (55%,  $n = 123$ ) indicated that they still receive FLPB. Unlike the operators, there were no significant differences between the components or Army SOF types (Appendix C).

Figure 7. Leaders receiving FLPB



Note. Sample sizes and frequencies are presented in Appendix C.

### SECTION III: EFFECTIVENESS OF FLPB

This section describes the extent to which SOF operators are motivated by FLPB for language acquisition and maintenance. Unit leader's perspectives of the motivational power of monetary incentives, in general, and the FLPB program, specifically, are examined.

#### Research Questions

This section addresses the following questions:

- Does FLPB motivate operators to acquire/maintain foreign language proficiency?
- What factors affect operator perceptions of how motivating FLPB is?
- Do leaders believe that FLPB is an effective incentive for operators in their units?

#### Main Findings

The extent to which FLPB is motivating depends on several factors. Most SOF operators (68%) indicated FLPB is *moderately motivating* to *very motivating*. The degree that FLPB motivates operators, however, varies depending on the type of language training (i.e., self-study or structured training), current receipt of FLPB, and language difficulty. FLPB is more motivating for SOF operators currently receiving FLPB and for those who study easier languages (i.e., CAT I languages over CAT IV languages). Additionally, FLPB is a stronger motivator when operators are in structured training compared to when they are required to attain/maintain language skills on their own time.

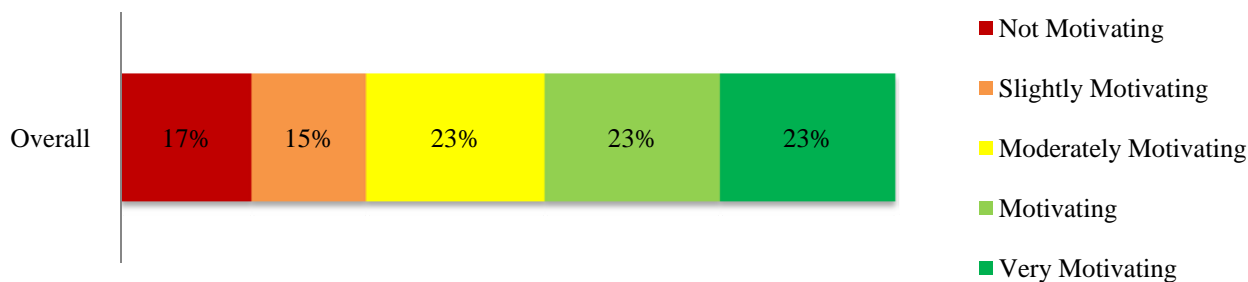
Unit leaders rated both general monetary incentives and FLPB, specifically. Leaders viewed FLPB slightly more favorably than operators. General monetary incentives were described as more motivating than FLPB specifically; however, most unit leaders described FLPB as *moderately motivating* or *very motivating*. Overall, leaders believed FLPB provides an effective incentive for operators in their units.

#### Detailed Findings

##### *Operator perceptions of the extent to which FLPB is motivating*

Most SOF operators (68%) perceive FLPB as *moderately motivating* to *very motivating* (Figure 8, p. 14). An equal number of operators indicated *moderately motivating* (23%), *motivating* (23%), and *very motivating* (23%). The following differences between operators were examined: training, language difficulty, current receipt of FLPB, and Army SOF types.

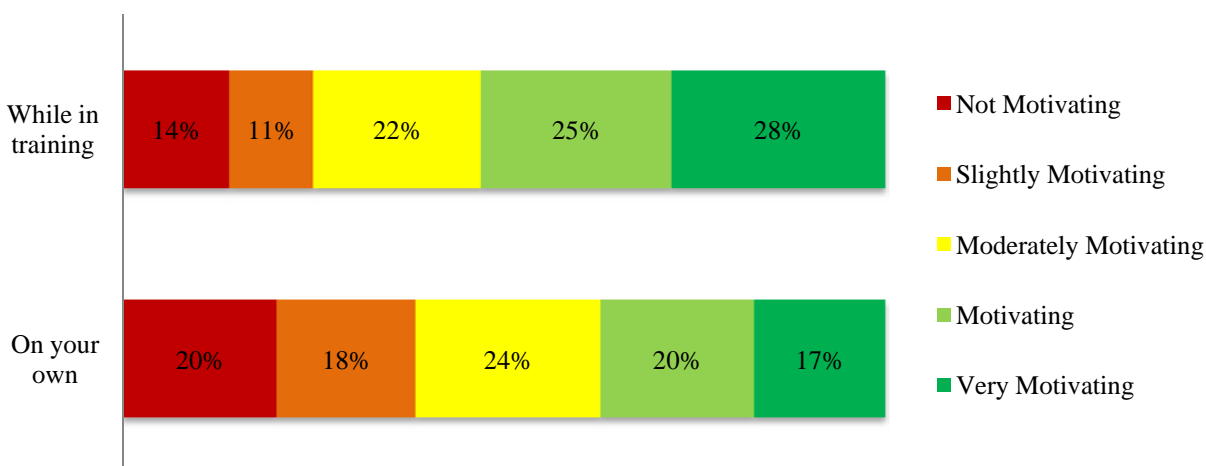
Figure 8. SOF operator perception of the extent to which FLPB is motivating



Factors related to the extent to which operators feel FLPB is motivating

A number of factors affect the extent to which FLPB motivates operators to acquire and maintain language proficiency. First, SOF operators were asked to indicate how motivating FLPB was while in training and while on their own (i.e., during personal time outside of language training). Results indicated that operators were more motivated by FLPB during training than when required to independently study (Figure 9, p. 14). One possible reason for this difference is that attaining language proficiency may be perceived as more likely with structured training than with self-study.

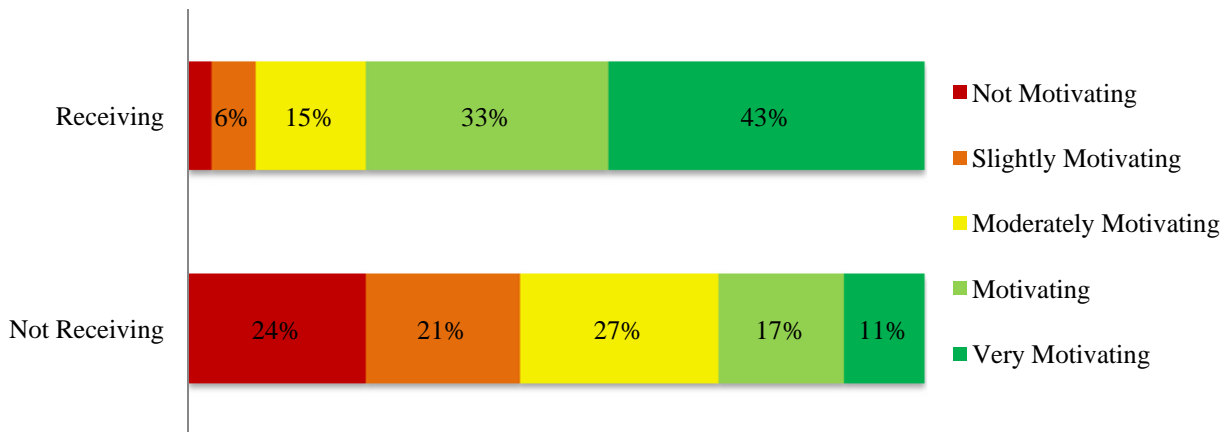
Figure 9. Operator perceptions of the extent to which FLPB is motivating while in training vs. on own



Note. Sample size, means, and frequencies are presented in Appendix D.

Second, SOF operators who currently receive FLPB were compared to those who are not receiving FLPB. Operators who receive FLPB perceive it as more motivating (Figure 10, p. 15). Specifically, over 40% of those currently receiving FLPB rate the program as *very motivating*, while only 11% of those currently not receiving FLPB rate the program as *very motivating*. This is consistent with the findings of Dierdorff and Surface (2008), which showed that personnel who received proficiency pay after their initial training and proficiency test were more likely to maintain and gain proficiency over the subsequent five years of testing.

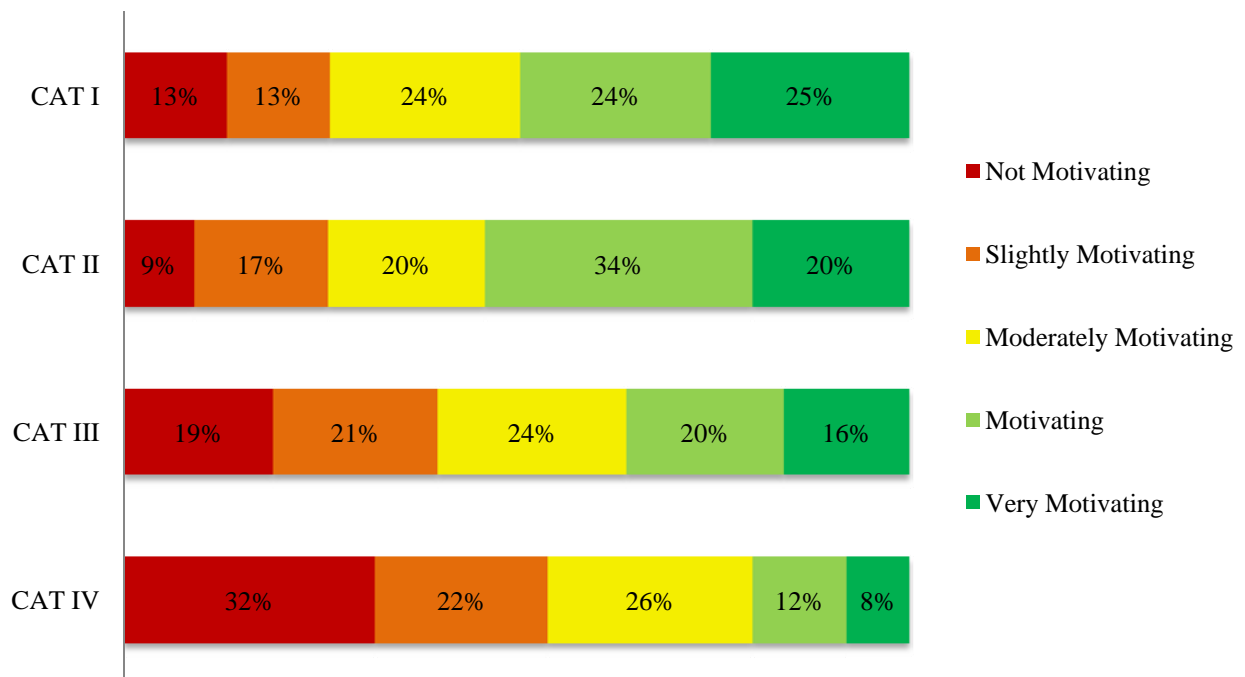
*Figure 10.* Perceptions of the extent to which FLPB is motivating of those currently receiving vs. those not receiving FLPB



*Note.* Sample size, means, and frequencies are presented in Appendix D.

Third, the extent to which operators perceive FLPB to be motivating is affected by the difficulty of the language that they study. Results indicated that those who study CAT I and II languages (i.e., easier languages for native English speakers) perceive FLPB as more motivating than those who study more difficult languages (i.e., CAT III or IV; Figure 11, p. 15). This makes sense because those studying less difficult languages are more likely to achieve the required FLPB proficiency level.

*Figure 11.* Language difficulty and perceptions of the extent to which FLPB is motivating

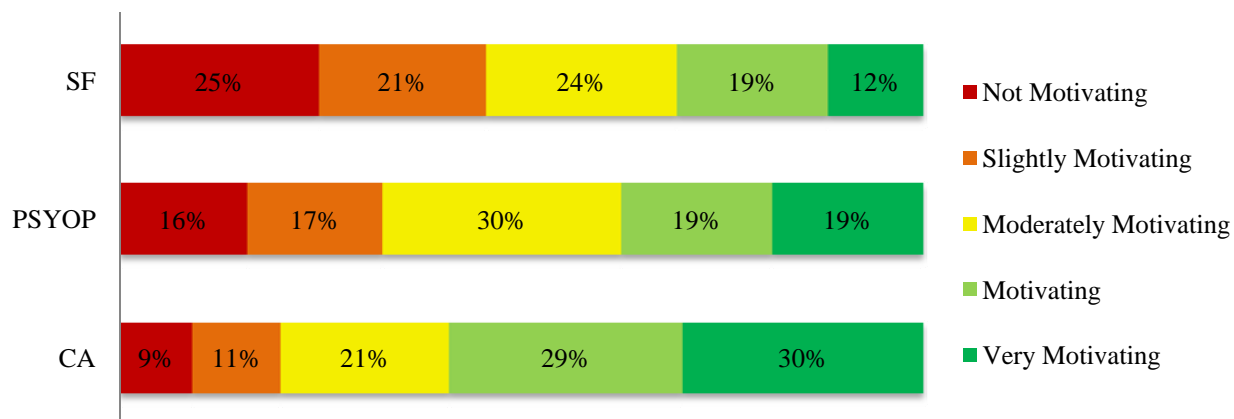


*Note.* Sample size, means, and frequencies are presented in Appendix D.



Fourth, differences in the extent to which FLPB is motivating were also found when examining Army SOF type (Figure 12, p. 16). CA operators were more motivated by FLPB than PSYOP or SF operators, with most (59%) CA operators indicating FLPB was *motivating* to *very motivating*. SF were the least likely to perceive FLPB as motivating with only 31% rating FLPB as *motivating* or *very motivating*.

Figure 12. Army SOF type and perceptions of the extent to which FLPB is motivating

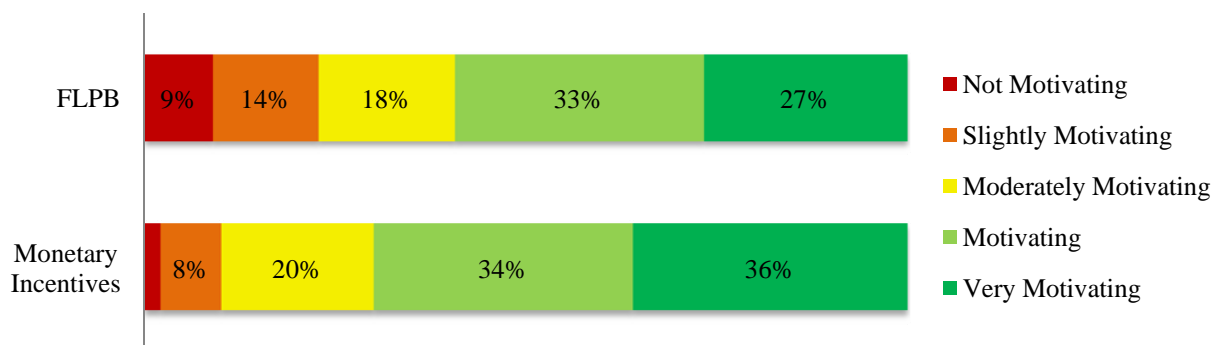


Note. Sample size, means, and frequencies are presented in Appendix D.

#### Unit leader perceptions of the extent to which FLPB is motivating

Unit leaders were asked how much they perceived operators in their unit to be motivated by monetary incentives in general and by FLPB specifically. Most unit leaders (70%) indicated their units are *motivated* (34%) to *very motivated* (36%) by monetary incentives. FLPB was seen as less motivating than monetary incentives in general; however, the majority of leaders (60%) described FLPB as *motivating* or *very motivating* for their units (Figure 13, p. 16). This implies that leaders view FLPB as motivating, but feel that improvements could make FLPB more motivating as a monetary incentive. Overall, compared to operator perceptions of FLPB, leaders perceive FLPB to have slightly more motivational impact on the personnel in their units.

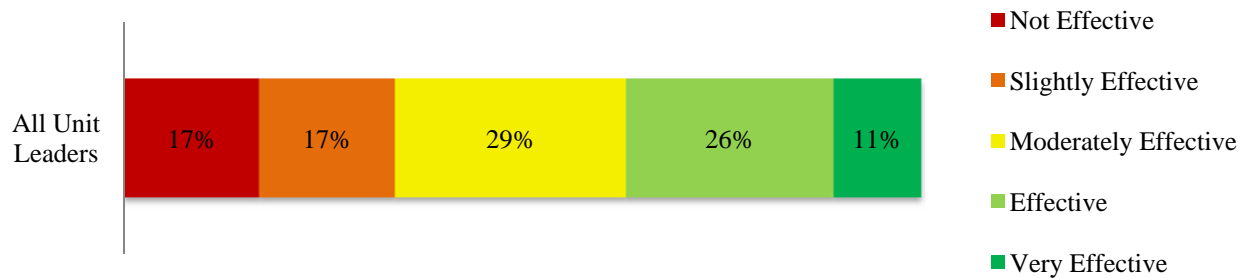
Figure 13. Unit leader perceptions of the extent to which monetary incentives are motivating for operators



Note. Sample size, means, and frequencies are presented in Appendix D.

Unit leaders were also asked to rate the effectiveness of FLPB as motivation for their units to attain and maintain language proficiency. Most leaders indicated that FLPB was *moderately effective* (29%) to *effective* (26%; Figure 14, p. 17) as a language motivational tool.

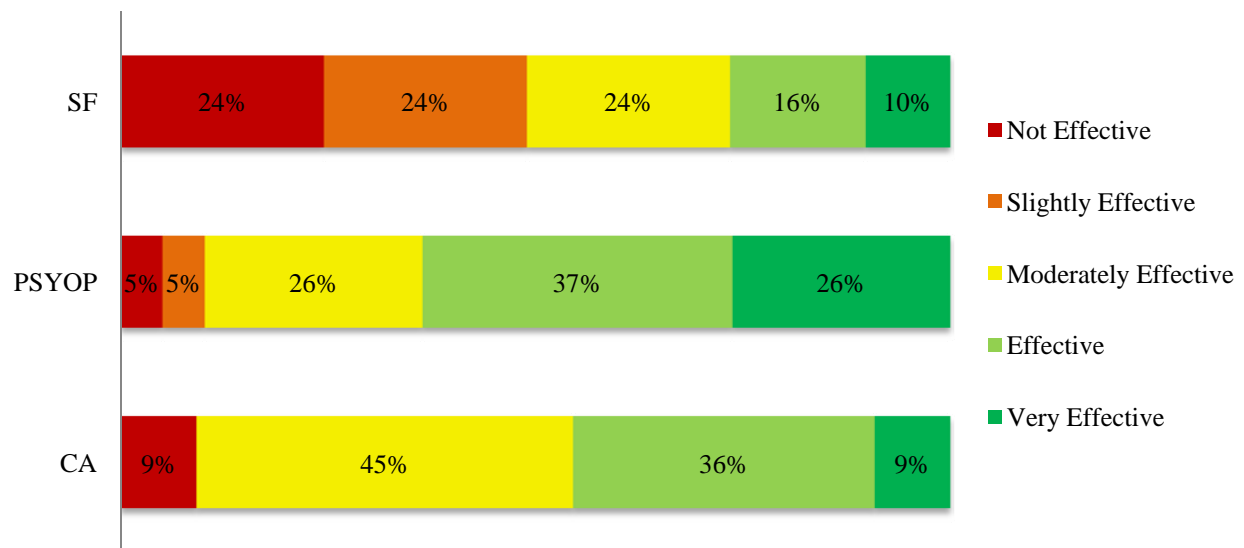
Figure 14. Unit leader perceptions of FLPB effectiveness



Note. Sample size, means, and frequencies are presented in Appendix D.

Between Army SOF types, unit leader perceptions of the effectiveness of FLPB were different, with SF leaders indicating the lowest levels of effectiveness (Figure 15, p. 17).

Figure 15. Unit leader perceptions of FLPB effectiveness



Note. Sample size, means, and frequencies are presented in Appendix D.

## SECTION IV: FAIRNESS OF FLPB PROCEDURES

Currently, DoD FLPB policy specifies that operators can receive FLPB if they are proficient in a DoD-approved foreign language and meet one of the following conditions: 1) are in a military specialty that requires proficiency, 2) have received foreign language training, 3) are assigned to military duties requiring foreign language proficiency, or 4) are proficient in a language which the Military Secretary has identified as critical (DoDI 7280.3). Furthermore, in order to receive FLPB, operators must meet Service-specific requirements that vary across the Services. Assessing how the SOF community feels about the fairness of these procedures is necessary because perceptions of fairness have been linked to satisfaction with pay programs (Lee, Law, & Bobko, 1999). If operators are not satisfied with the fairness of the FLPB program, they are unlikely to be motivated by it. This section addresses SOF operators' and leaders' ratings of the fairness of FLPB procedures and factors affecting their perceptions of FLPB fairness.

### Research Questions

This section addresses the following questions:

- Do operators and leaders perceive FLPB procedures as fair?
- What factors affect fairness perceptions?

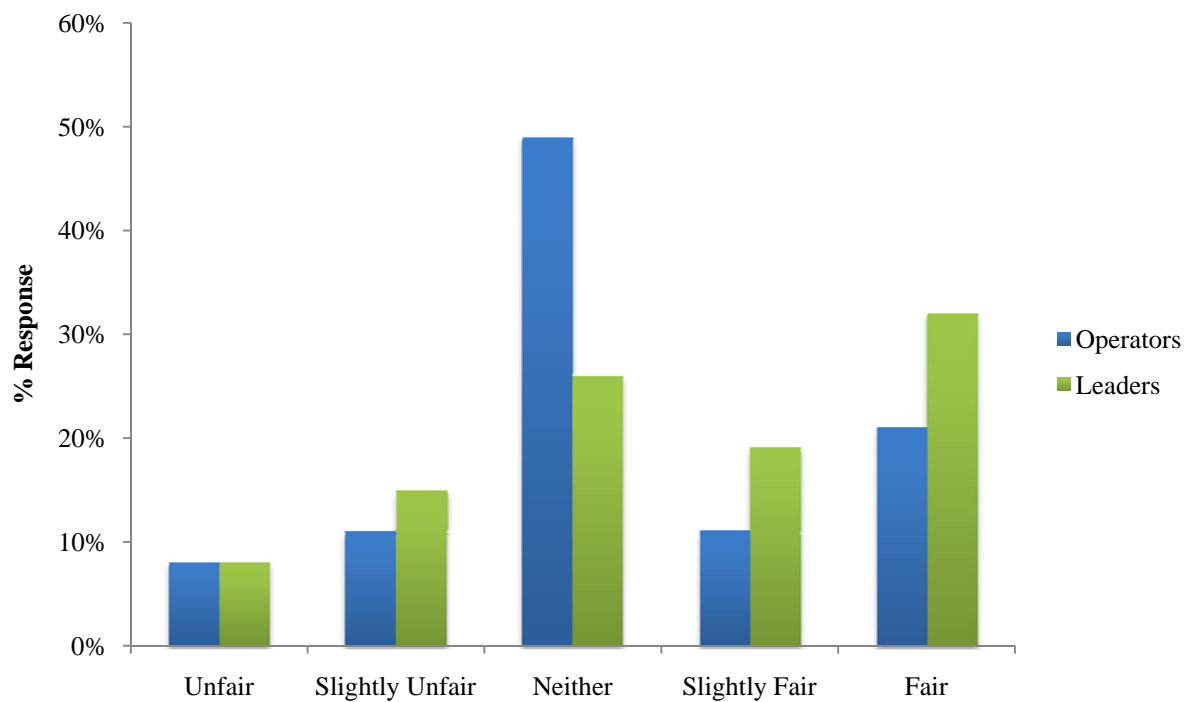
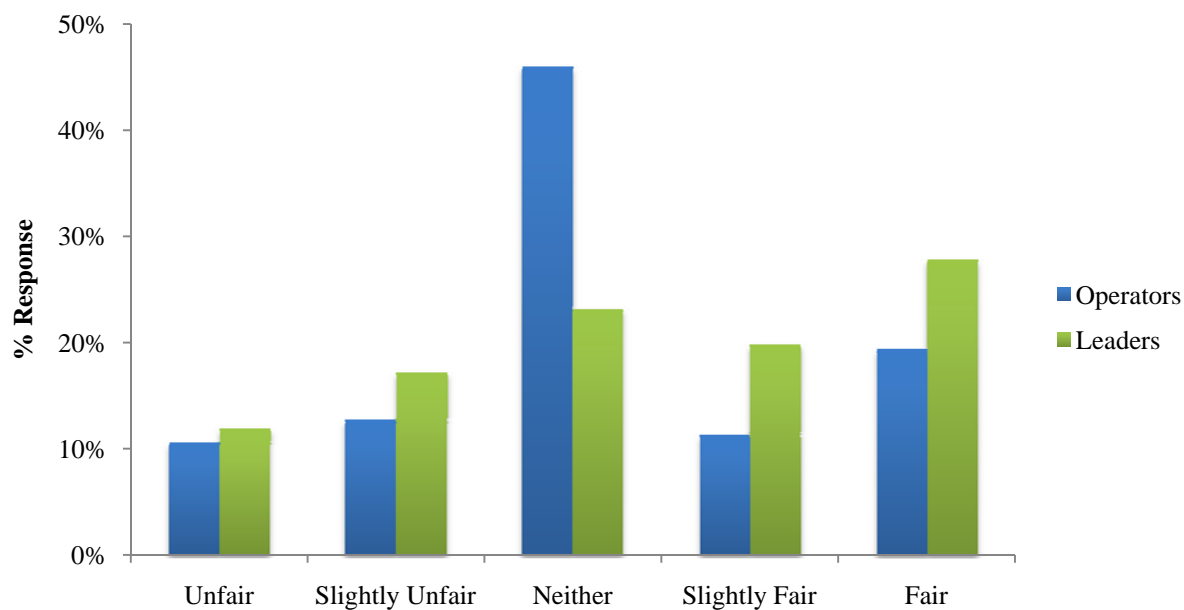
### Main Findings

Most SOF operators feel that FLPB procedures are *neither fair nor unfair*. These responses largely consisted of those who do not currently receive FLPB. Leaders perceived greater procedural fairness than operators, with most leaders reporting that FLPB procedures are *fair*. When comparing the types of procedures, operators gave higher ratings for fairness of procedures for allocating FLPB amounts than for procedures for determining minimum required proficiency levels to receive FLPB. Leaders' fairness ratings did not differ between the two types of FLPB procedures examined in this study.

Operator differences in regards to fairness were found in relation to the current receipt of FLPB, language difficulty, Army SOF types, and units within USASOC. In particular, those who currently receive FLPB perceived the procedures as fairer than those who currently do not receive FLPB. Perceptions of FLPB between language difficulty levels indicated that those assigned to languages considered more difficult for a native English speaker to learn (i.e., CAT IV), perceived less fairness in the procedures than those in the less difficult to learn languages. Between Army SOF types, CA operators perceived FLPB procedures as fairer than SF operators. There were no significant differences between leader subgroups for fairness.

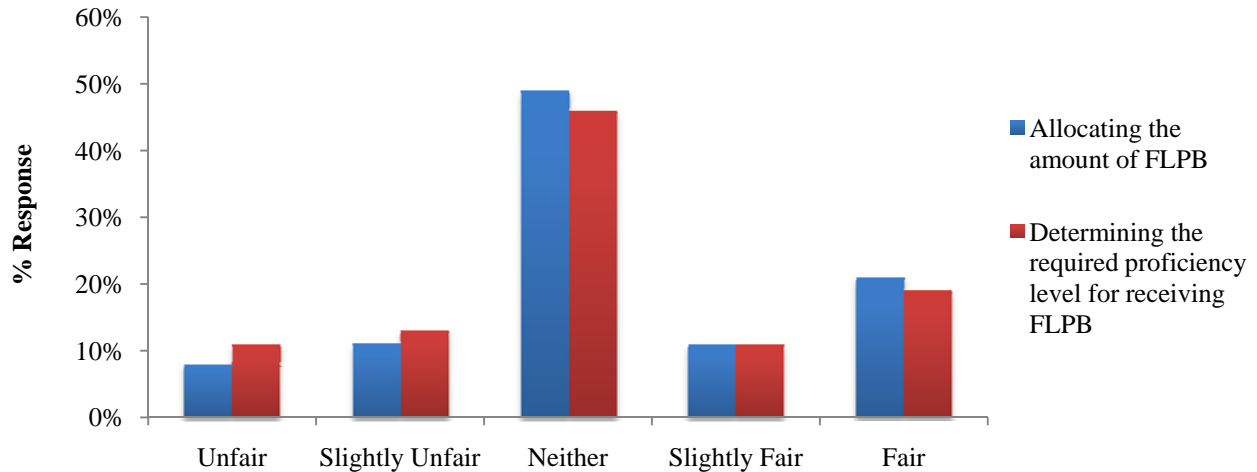
### Detailed Findings

Overall, most operators indicated that procedures for allocating the FLPB amount and procedures used in determining the required level to qualify for receive FLPB are *neither fair nor unfair*. Leaders were more positive in their ratings of FLPB fairness; they most frequently indicated that FLPB procedures are *fair* (Figures 16 and 17 on p. 19).

*Figure 16. Fairness in allocating FLPB amount**Figure 17. Fairness in determining the required level for receiving FLPB*

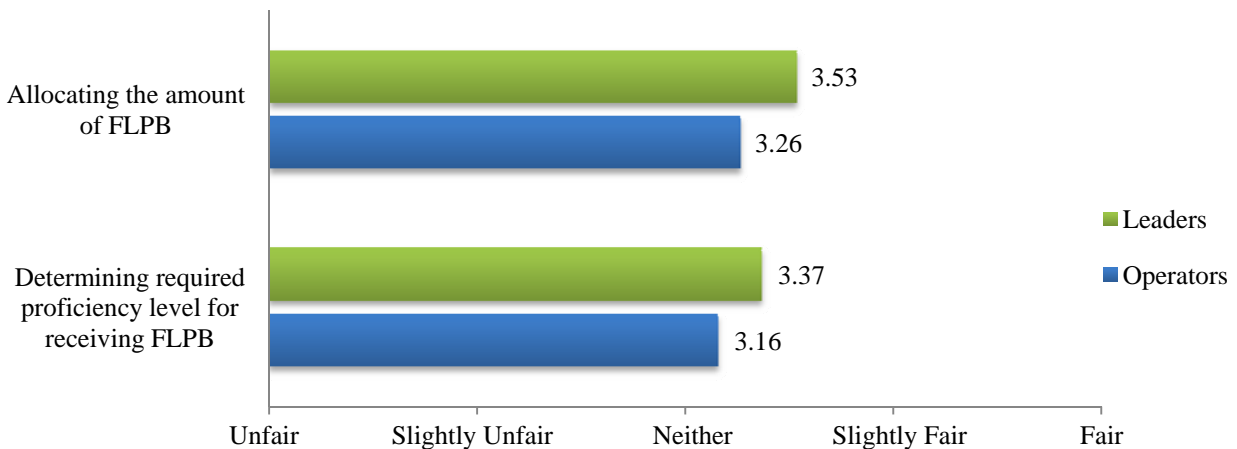
When comparing types of FLPB procedures, operators rated procedures for allocating the amount of FLPB as fairer than procedures used to determine a minimum level required for receiving FLPB<sup>2</sup> (Figure 18, p. 20). Leaders did not significantly differ in their ratings of the two types of procedures (Appendix E, Table 2).

Figure 18. Operator comparison of FLPB procedures



On average, leaders indicated greater fairness in the procedures for allocating the amount of FLPB than did operators (Figure 19, p. 20). However, operators and leaders did not differ significantly in their ratings of the fairness of the procedures used to determine the required level of proficiency to qualify for FLPB.

Figure 19. Mean fairness comparison of SOF operators and leaders

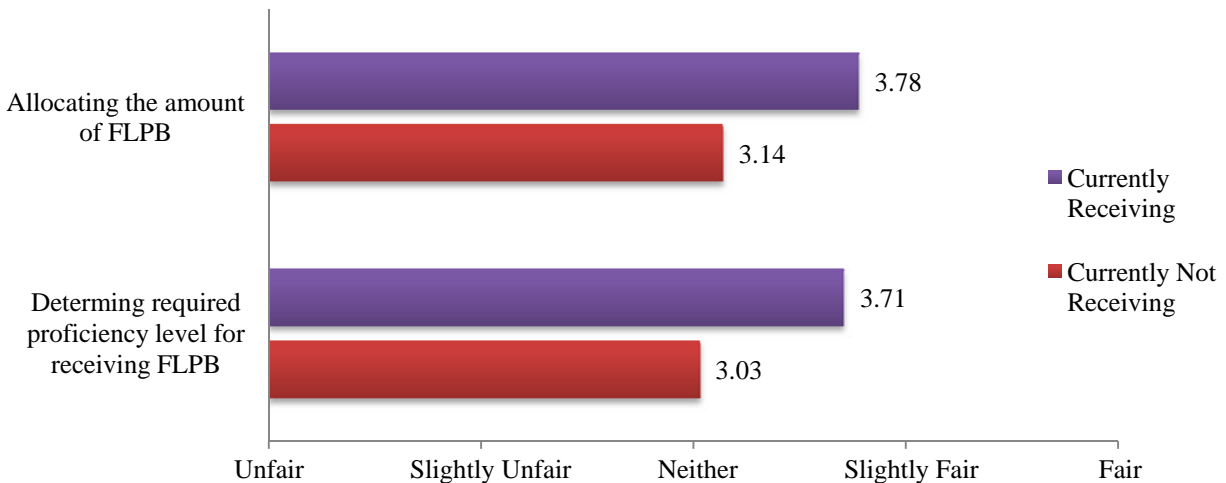


Note. Sample sizes and frequencies are presented in Appendix E. 1 = *Unfair*, 2 = *Slightly fair*, 3 = *Neither*, 4 = *Slightly fair*, 5 = *Fair*

<sup>2</sup>  $t(1958.17) = 1.98, p < .05$ ; Fairness for allocating amount of FLPB ( $M = 3.26, SD = 1.13$ ), Fairness for determining proficiency level required to qualify for pay ( $M = 3.16, SD = 1.19$ )

Overall, those who currently receive FLPB described procedures as fairer than those who do not currently receive FLPB (Figure 20, p. 21).

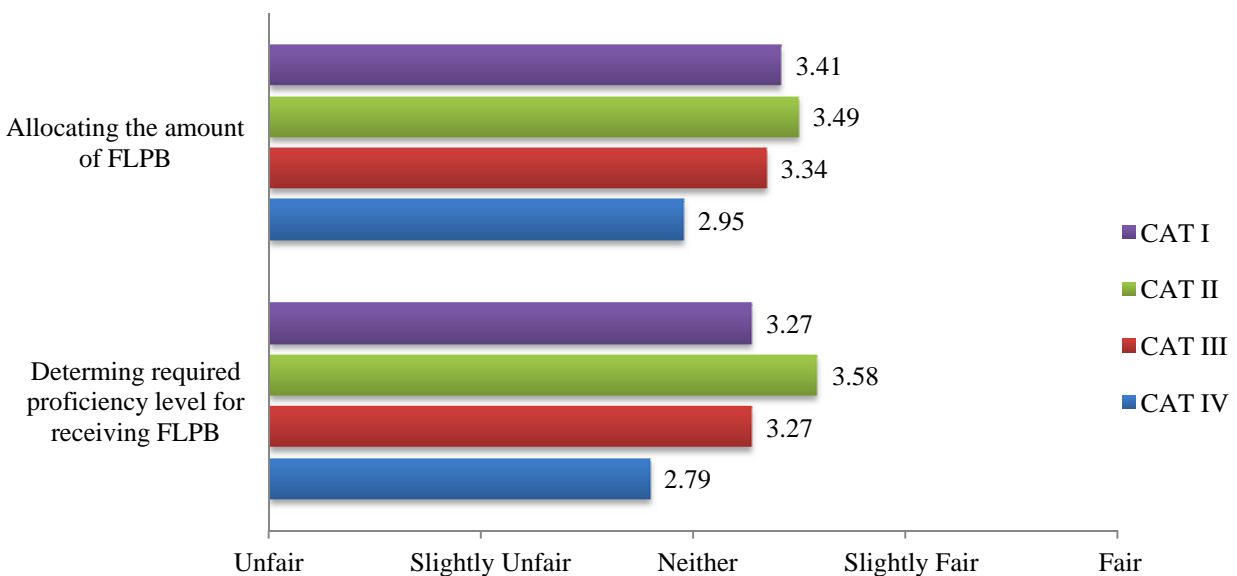
Figure 20. Mean fairness comparison by current receipt



Note. Sample sizes and frequencies are presented in Appendix E. 1 = Unfair, 2 = Slightly fair, 3 = Neither, 4 = Slightly fair, 5 = Fair

When considering the difficulty of operators' official or required AOR language, those with CAT IV languages rated FLPB procedures as less fair than operators with CAT I, II, and III languages (Figure 21, p. 21).

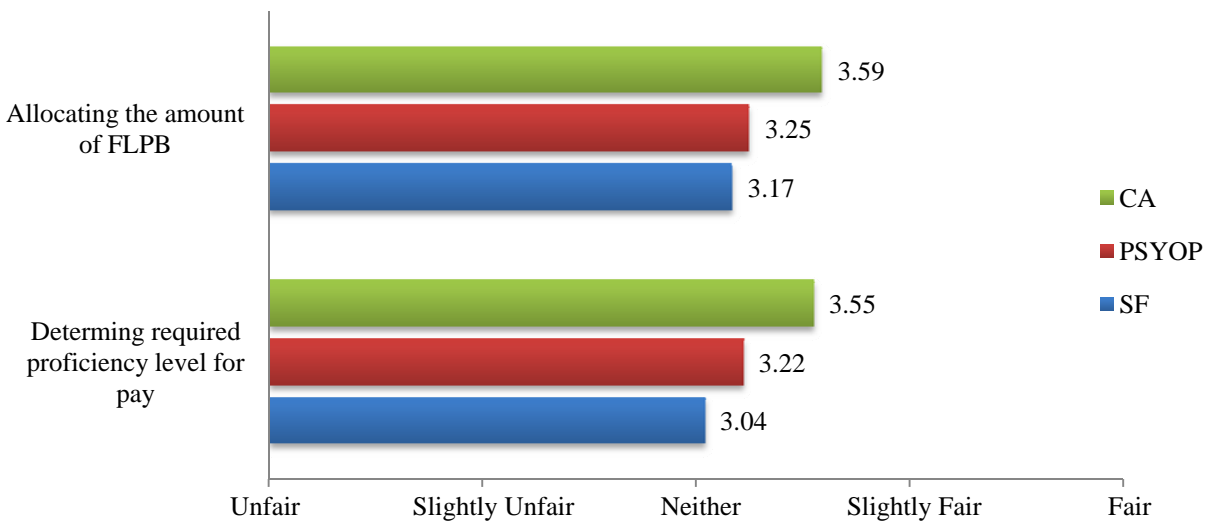
Figure 21. Mean fairness comparison by language difficulty



Note. Sample sizes and frequencies are presented in Appendix E. 1 = Unfair, 2 = Slightly fair, 3 = Neither, 4 = Slightly fair, 5 = Fair

When considering Army SOF type, CA operators perceived FLPB procedures as fairer than SF operators (Figure 22, p. 22).

Figure 22. Mean fairness comparison by SOF operator type



Note. Sample sizes and frequencies are presented in Appendix E. 1 = Unfair, 2 = Slightly fair, 3 = Neither, 4 = Slightly fair, 5 = Fair

## SECTION V: SOF COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

SOF operators and leaders provided suggestions regarding how to make FLPB more motivating. Operators and leaders were given the opportunity to provide information on how to improve the FLPB program in two ways: (1) by selecting from a set of response options provided on the survey (i.e., close-ended responses) and (2) by writing in suggestions for improving the program<sup>3</sup> (i.e., open-ended responses). This section examines both types of survey responses for increasing the motivating potential of FLPB. Additionally, comments from operators who participated in focus groups for this project were examined (see Appendix B – Methodology for information regarding focus groups).

### Research Questions

This section addresses the following questions:

- What recommendations do operators have to increase motivation through the FLPB program?
- What recommendations do leaders have for the FLPB program to increase unit motivation?

### Main Findings

While most operators and leaders described FLPB as motivating (see Section III), many respondents offered suggestions on how the program could be improved to increase motivation. The top four suggestions for improvement most frequently provided by operators and leaders were to increase the amount of pay, start pay at a lower proficiency level (most frequently at the 1/1 level), provide more time for language training, and pay for any two tested modalities. Specifically, the most frequent suggestion for improving FLPB by both operators (61%) and leaders (76%) was to increase the amount paid for language proficiency. Considering the amount of work required to attain and maintain language skills, operators and leaders often felt that the pay was not sufficient.

*“I don’t think it’s really an incentive. It’s certainly not an incentive for me, or a lot of people that I know, to really push yourself to go out and study more... \$200 a month for the amount of work it would take to raise that score...for me, personally, it’s not worth it.”*

SOF Operator, USASOC

Other commonly suggested improvements to the effectiveness of FLPB included changes to:

- Language training – including allowing for more time and training opportunities  
*“We just need more time to do our language training”*  
SOF Operator, AFSOC
- Testing method – including changing the focus to other modalities  
*“Change to a listening and speaking test rather than a reading and listening test.”*  
SOF Operator, Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC)

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<sup>3</sup> Open-ended theme category definitions and example comments are included in Appendix F.



- Command emphasis  
*“more time and resources from the command devoted to language”*  
SOF Operator, MARSOC
- Administrative process  
*“Ease the admin process”*  
SOF Operator, TRADOC

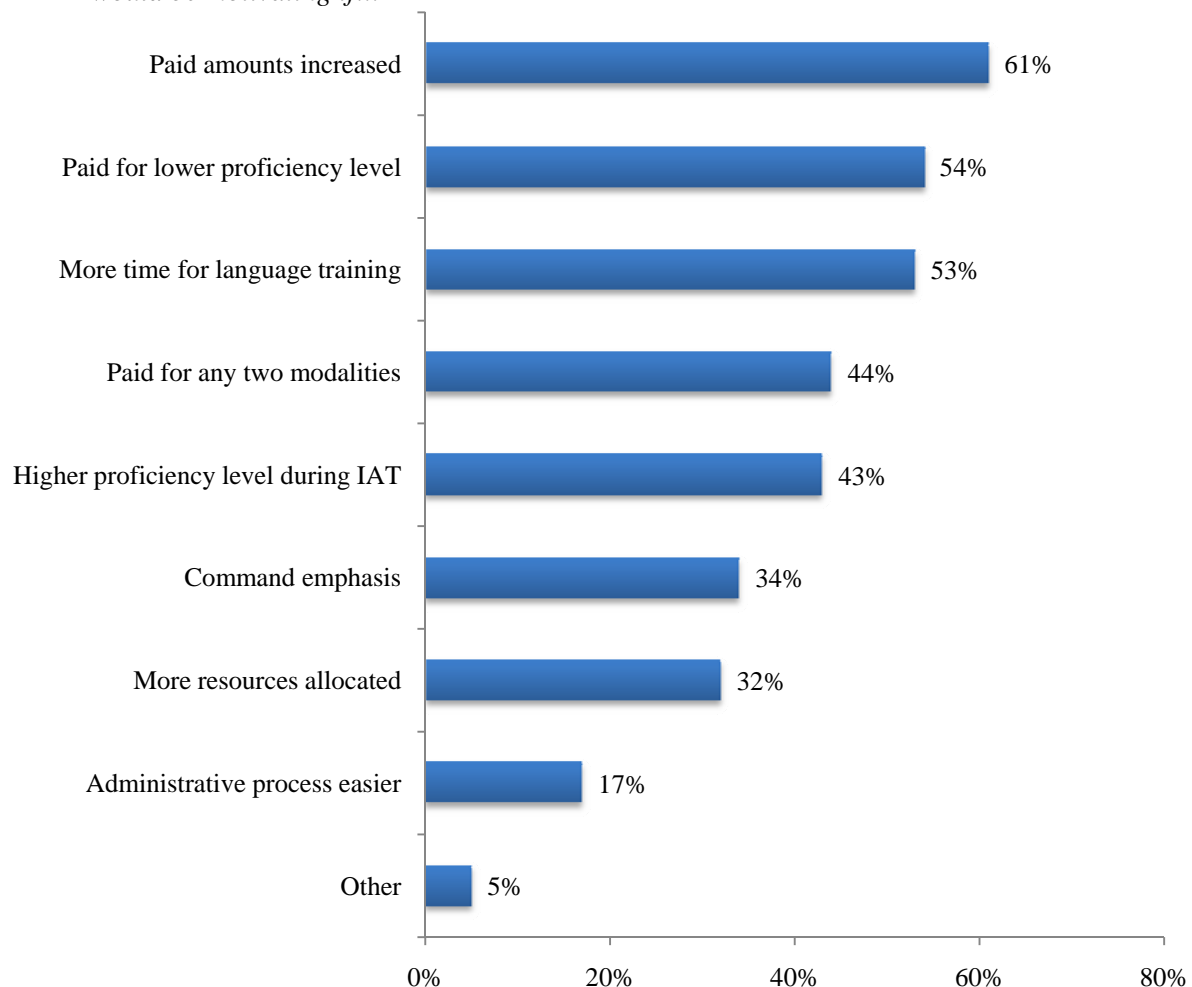
## Detailed Findings

### Operator Recommendations

SOF operators were asked to provide recommendations about ways to make the FLPB program more motivating. The most frequently endorsed suggestion was to increase the amounts paid for FLPB (Figure 23, p. 24).

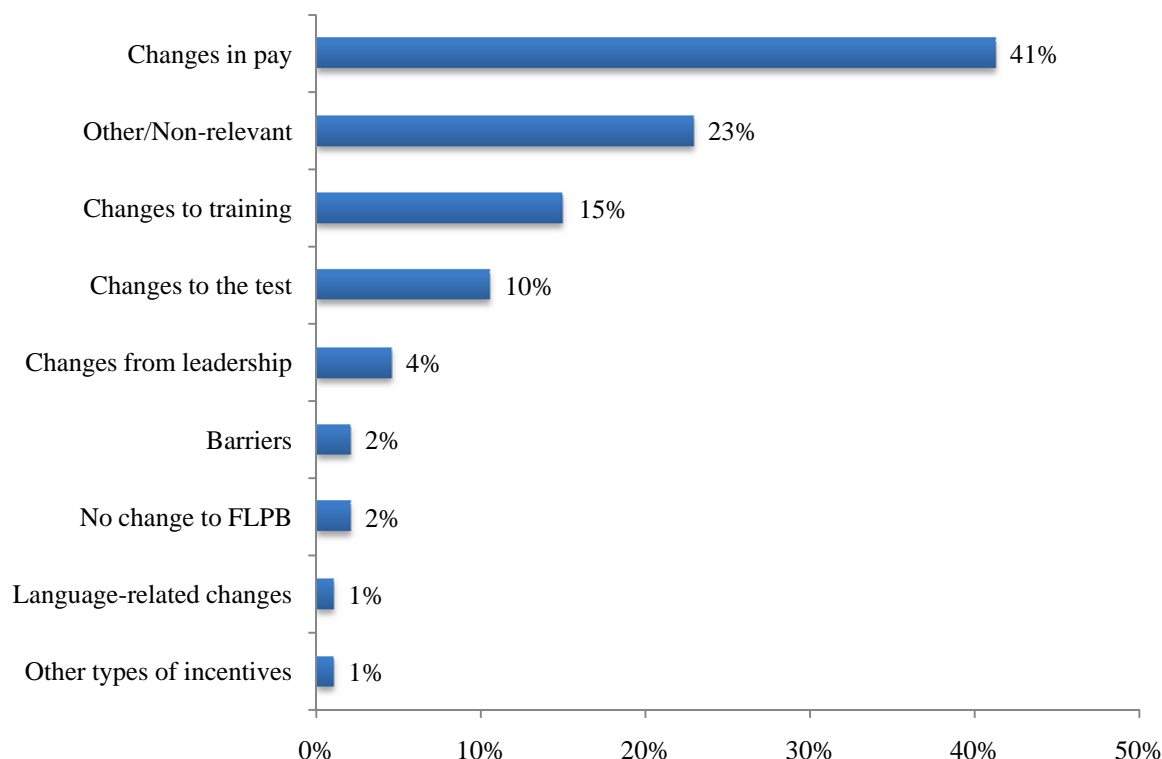
Figure 23. Operator closed-ended item recommendations (n = 929)

*FLPB would be motivating if...*



In their open-ended responses, most operators gave similar recommendations for improving FLPB: changes in payment, changes to training, changes to the testing policies, changes from leadership, language-related changes, and other types of incentives (Figure 24, p. 25). Some operators also described barriers to achieving language proficiency.

Figure 24. Operator open-ended recommendation themes (n = 267)



*Changes in Pay.* Most operators [61% of the close-ended items and 15% of open-ended comments (37% of the changes in pay comments)] indicated that to make the FLPB program more motivating, the paid amounts should increase (Figure 25 and Table 1 on p. 26).

*“Higher pay for all levels of proficiency would be the highest general motivator to Soldiers as a whole”*

SOF Operator, 19<sup>th</sup> SFG

Focus group participants also described a need to increase the pay for FLPB.

*“I think we need to make the carrot a little bit bigger in order for people to go there. There is no incentive”*

SOF Operator, WARCOM

Empirical research suggests that motivational programs must balance the input and output of a program (Adams, 1963). In other words, the amount of pay received (output) should be equivalent to the amount of work that is exerted (input). If this balance is off, the motivation to achieve the goal will be insufficient. With the numerous tasks and training requirements that SOF operators are required to

maintain, and the amount of effort/training time it takes to learn and stay proficient in a language, SOF operators suggest FLPB rates should be greater.

*“Money could be a big motivator; but the amount paid in order to receive FLPB does not correlate to the amount of time required to maintain the language skill of 2/2 or higher”*

SOF Operator, 5<sup>th</sup> SFG

Figure 25. Operator closed-ended pay recommendations (n = 929)

*FLPB would be motivating if...*

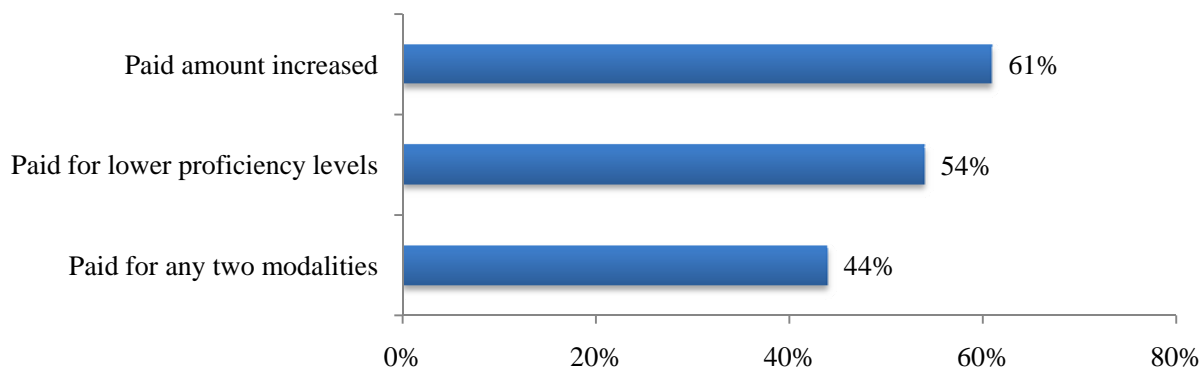


Table 1. Operator open-ended pay recommendations (n = 267)

Suggested Changes in Pay	Operator	MI Linguist <sup>4</sup>
Increase amount of pay	41	4
Receive pay at lower levels	29	1
Harder/critical language should be paid more	8	1
Higher levels should be paid more	7	2
Receive pay for multiple languages	7	-
Receive pay for each skill (listening, reading, speaking)	5	2
All language should receive the same pay	3	-
Lump sum payment	2	-
Pay should be for newly learned language (not native speakers)	1	-
Other pay changes	7	-

*Note.* Some comments contained multiple themes. Therefore, the total number of codes assigned may be greater than the total number of comments. See Appendix F for comment theme definitions and exemplar comments. MI Linguists presented in this table were those assigned to SOF units.

Another common pay-related recommendation in both the closed-ended items (54%) and in the open-ended comments (11% of all comments; 26% of change in pay comments) was to start receiving pay for language proficiency at a lower level.

*“The most important thing would be to pay for lower levels of proficiency”*

SOF Operator, TRADOC

<sup>4</sup> MI Linguists presented in this table were those assigned to SOF units.

Operators most frequently suggested starting pay at the 1/1 level, as that is the graduation standard for many operators who attend initial language training.

*“If service members were paid for scores of 1/1 it would encourage them to maintain their proficiency. As it stands now, if a 2/2 seems too unattainable, then most people won’t bother even keeping up with a 1/1”*

SOF Operator, 4<sup>th</sup> POG

Focus group members also frequently recommended receiving pay at lower levels.

*“Money motivates everybody, let’s face it. We’re not getting paid for the language capability that we have, unless we’re, what, 2/2 or better? So, those of us in the squadron that are going over there, we’re not linguists. It’s an additional duty for us to learn this language, to help us out. We’re going over there at a 1/1 level, and we’re using it to not just my benefit, everybody on our team’s benefit. I think money, paying people, starting at a level that they can use over there is going to motivate people.”*

SOF Operator, AFSOC

*Changes in Training.* The second most frequently mentioned type of recommendation from operators was to make a change in language training (Figure 26 and Table 2 on p. 28). Specifically, over half (53%) of the operators responding to the closed-ended item and additional operators in the open-ended comments, recommended having more time for training

*“We just need more time to do our language training now and the problem would be solved.”*

SOF Operator, USSOCOM

Other language training changes included:

- Achieve higher levels of proficiency during initial acquisition training (IAT)

*“Initial language training to a higher proficiency standard. If you finish the training and aren’t at a level to receive the pay, the chances of increasing proficiency on your own to a level where you get paid is pretty slim in my opinion. However, if when initial training is complete and the soldier is at a proficiency level where they receive the pay, keeping the pay coming would be a motivating factor for language skill maintenance.”*

SOF Operator, USSOCOM Head Quarters

- Having dedicated time for training

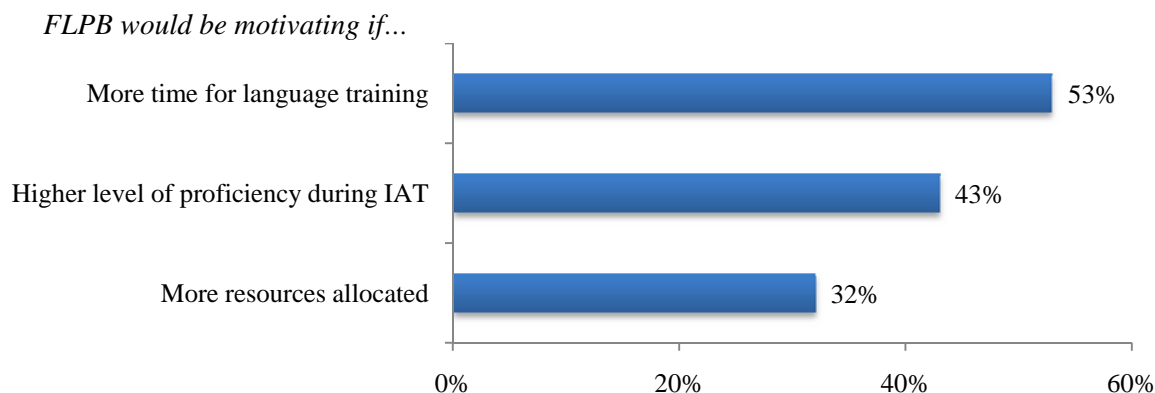
*“Allocate more dedicated time to maintaining language proficiency”*

SOF Operator, 10<sup>th</sup> SFG

- Need more immersion opportunities

*“Offer warriors opportunities for immersion based on their dedication and proven performance leaning a language... Everyone I know in an SF group would love to attend an immersion program within their AOR.”*

SOF Operator, Defense Attaché System

Figure 26. Operator closed-ended item training recommendations ( $n = 929$ )Table 2. Operator open-ended training recommendations ( $n = 267$ )

Suggested Changes to Training Content Themes	Operator	MI Linguist <sup>5</sup>
More training time/opportunities	13	1
More immersion opportunities	9	-
Have dedicated training time	5	1
Use the Defense Language Institute (DLI)	3	-
Improve quality of training	2	-
More resources for training	2	-
Other training suggestions	6	-

*Note.* Some comments contained multiple themes. Therefore, the total number of codes assigned may be greater than the total number of comments. See Appendix F for comment theme definitions and exemplar comments. MI Linguists presented in this table were those assigned to SOF units.

*Other Suggestions.* Other recommendations provided by operators included changes in command emphasis, administrative processes, and language skill testing (Figure 27 and Table 3 on p. 30). Command emphasis changes were the most frequently mentioned of the remaining recommendations with 34% of SOF operators selecting an increase in command emphasis in language training in the close-ended item and additional operators commenting for more command emphasis.

*“Leadership involvement and endorsement of it as a critical skill set.”*

SOF Operator, AFSOC

Administrative changes for the open-ended comments included:

- Easier application processes for FLPB

*“Simplify it administratively.”*

SOF Trainee, USAJFKSWCS – Student

<sup>5</sup> MI Linguists presented in this table were those assigned to SOF units.

- Allowing more people to qualify

*“most linguists were only paid when they were in a language qualified slot. I don't know the situation now, but if you are required to learn a language, you should be paid as long as you meet the requirement whether currently in a language slot or not.”*

SOF Operator, USAJFKSWCS – Staff

- Being able to pick languages

*“Let the Soldiers being trained have some say in what language they are going to trained in. I did not want to learn Polish, I never worked with Polish Soldiers and so was never interested in maintaining proficiency.”*

SOF Operator, USAJFKSWCS – Staff

Testing changes to improve FLPB described in the open-ended comments included:

- Changing the test from the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT)

*“Get rid of the DLPT 5!”*

SOF Operator, 1<sup>st</sup> SFG

- Focusing FLPB on other modalities like speaking

*“Make the OPI score official for FLPB purposes”*

SOF Operator, 4<sup>th</sup> POG

Focus group participants recommended providing other types of incentives, such as immersion opportunities (i.e., *“Immersion would be nice. Everybody will be motivated for that,”* SOF Operator, 4<sup>th</sup> POG), as well as suggested testing changes, such as changing the test to focus more on speaking.

*“I know some people speak better than they can read, or they listen to it, if an OPI will help with the pay, then sign me up.”*

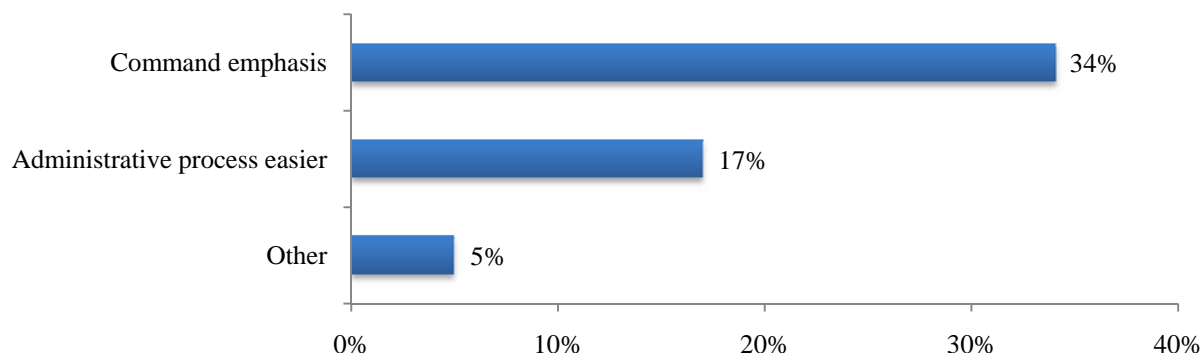
SOF Operator, WARCOM

*“If there is going to be a test, maybe they could just have partial FLP for speaking and listening. Like I said, a lot of us, after the Q, you're not going to see a whole lot of us doing any kind of reading, had then you're never going to get paid. We all like to get paid.”*

SOF Operator, 5<sup>th</sup> SFG

Figure 27. Other operator closed-ended item recommendations

*FLPB would be motivating if...*

Table 3. Operator open-ended recommendation themes for improving FLPB (*n* = 267)

Suggested Changes Content Themes	Operator	MI Linguist <sup>6</sup>
<b>Changes in Command Emphasis</b>		
Increase command emphasis	8	-
<b>Changes from Administration</b>		
Make administrative and application process easier	1	-
Allow more people to qualify	1	-
Be able to pick language	1	-
Other administrative changes	2	3
<b>Changes to the Test</b>		
Change the test	11	1
Focus on different modalities	6	-
Make the test more job related	4	-
Other testing suggestions	7	2
<b>Other Suggestion Content Themes</b>		
Provide other types of incentives	4	-
Other suggestions	1	-
No changes	5	-

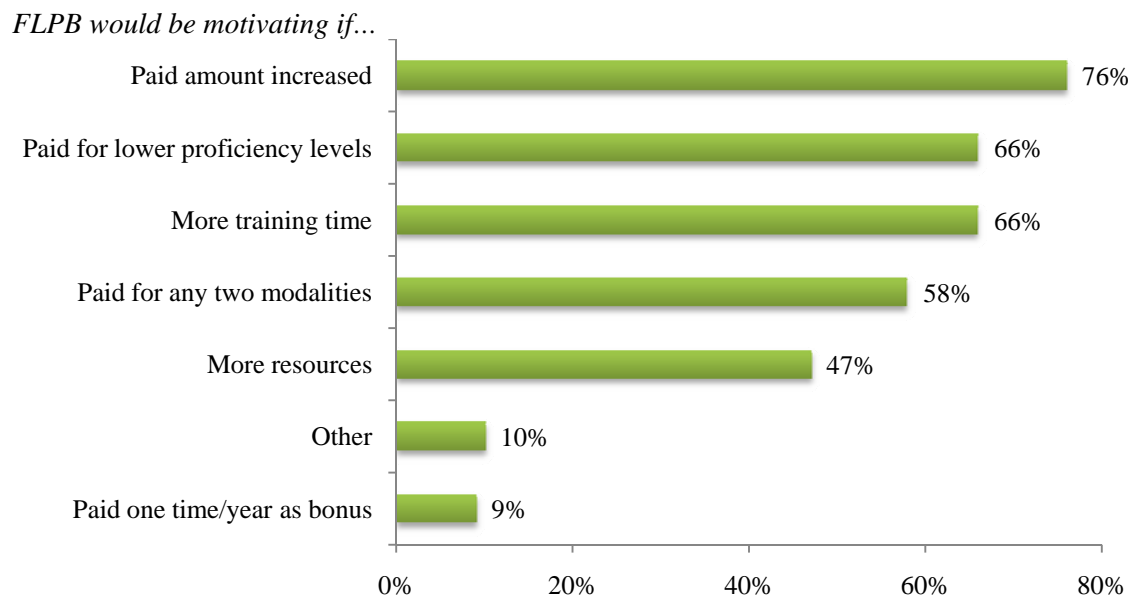
*Note.* Some comments contained multiple themes. Therefore, the total number of codes assigned may be greater than the total number of comments. See Appendix F for comment theme definitions and exemplar comments. MI Linguists presented in this table were those assigned to SOF units.

### *Leader Recommendations*

SOF unit leaders were asked to provide recommendations on how the FLPB program could be more motivating for their unit. Consistent with operators, leaders had the same top four closed-ended item recommendations: increase pay amount, pay for lower proficiency levels, allot more time for language training, and pay for any two of the tested modalities (Figures 28, p. 31).

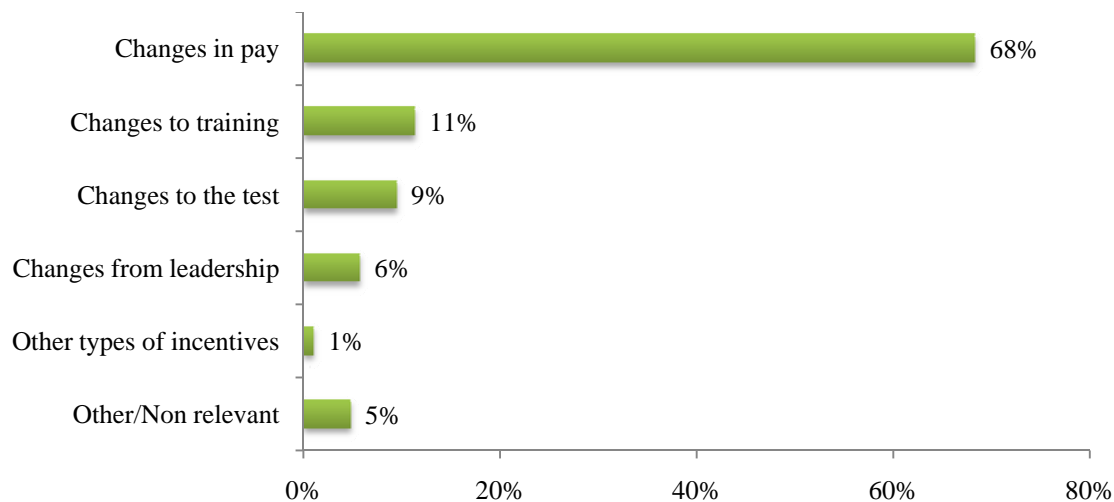
<sup>6</sup> MI Linguists presented in this table were those assigned to SOF units.

Figure 28. Leader closed-ended item recommendations (n = 140)



Open-ended recommendations made by leaders were also similar to operators, with the most frequently provided recommendation for a change in the payment of FLPB (Figure 29, p. 31).

Figure 29. Unit leader open-ended recommendation themes (n = 107)



*Changes in Pay.* Most leaders [76% on the close-ended item and 16% of open-ended comments (23% of the changes in pay comments)] indicated that to make the FLPB program more motivating, there needs to be an increase in the amount of pay (Figure 30 and Table 4 on p. 32).

*“Increase the incentive and you will increase the interest in the operators”*

SOF Leader, SF Command HQ



Another common recommendation from leaders in both the closed-ended (66%) and open-ended (26% of all leader comments; 38% of leader change in pay comments) items was to receive FLPB at the lower proficiency levels.

*“Apply proficiency pay at lower levels. The current system seem "a bridge to far" for some Soldiers based on available time to train. By paying at lower level it will motivate Soldier to study and dedicate more personal time”*

SOF Leader, 5<sup>th</sup> SFG

Figure 30. Leader closed-ended item pay recommendations (n = 140)

*FLPB would be motivating if...*

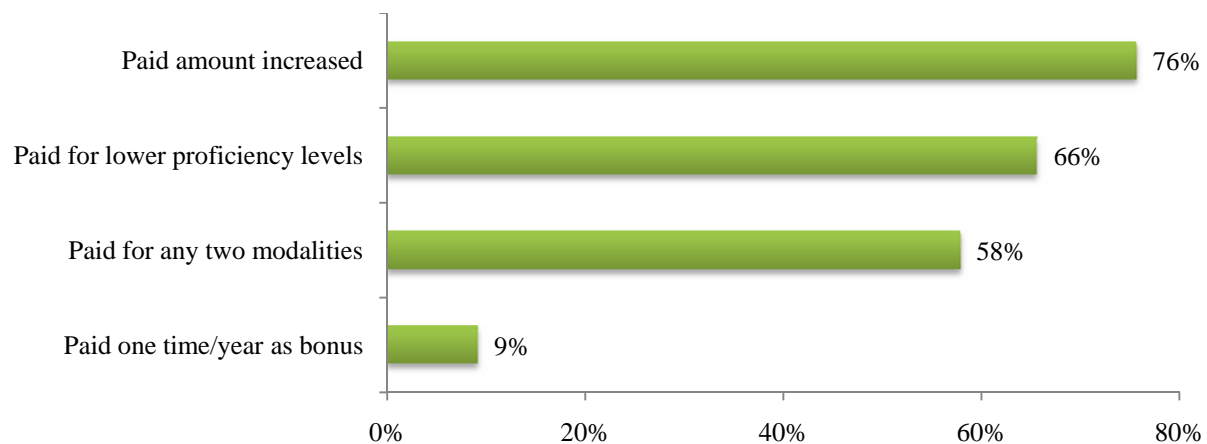


Table 4. Leader open-ended pay recommendation themes (n = 107)

Suggested Changes in Pay Content Themes	Unit Leaders	CLPM/ Lang. Office
Receive pay at lower levels	28	2
Increase amount of pay	17	2
Harder/critical language should be paid more	7	-
Higher proficiency levels should be paid more	5	-
Bonuses for sustaining levels for a period of time	4	-
Receive pay for multiple languages	3	1
Make payment standard across components/Services	2	1
Receive pay for each skill (listening, reading, speaking)	1	1
Other pay changes	6	-

*Note.* Some comments contained multiple themes. Therefore, the total number of codes assigned may be greater than the total number of comments. See Appendix F for comment theme definitions and exemplar comments.

Similar to operators, other frequent leader pay recommendations in the open-ended item were:

- The pay amount should match the effort needed to acquire and/or maintain language skills.  
*“I make \$150/month by spending on average 1 hour per month jumping out of an airplane. Compared to the effort to develop language proficiency, FLPB isn't worth my personal free time...”*

SOF Leader, USASOC

- More difficult or critical language should be paid more.  
*“Pay more for the more difficult languages. Indonesian is an easy language to learn- Arabic is quite a bit harder and should be paid accordingly”*

SOF Leader, 4<sup>th</sup> POG

*Other Leader Recommendations.* Leaders also recommended changes in training, administrative processes, and testing (Figure 31 and Table 5, p. 34). Language training changes were the most frequently mentioned of the three remaining recommendation themes with 66% of unit leaders selecting more language training time on the closed-ended item and some leaders commenting for more language training time on the open-ended item (i.e., *“provide the time for men to maintain proficiency”*). Other training changes included providing more resources (i.e., *“Better resources to train the target language”*) and providing immersion training opportunities (i.e., *“Allow funds to travel for immersion.”*). Unlike SOF operators, unit leaders were not asked a closed-ended item about increasing command emphasis. This difference may account for the limited number of open-ended comments about command emphasis that were provided by leaders.

Other recommendations to improve FLPB were described in the open-ended comments and included administrative and testing changes such as:

- Allowing more people to qualify  
*“Make a basic level FLPB that is paid to all SOF personnel who maintain a language skill”*

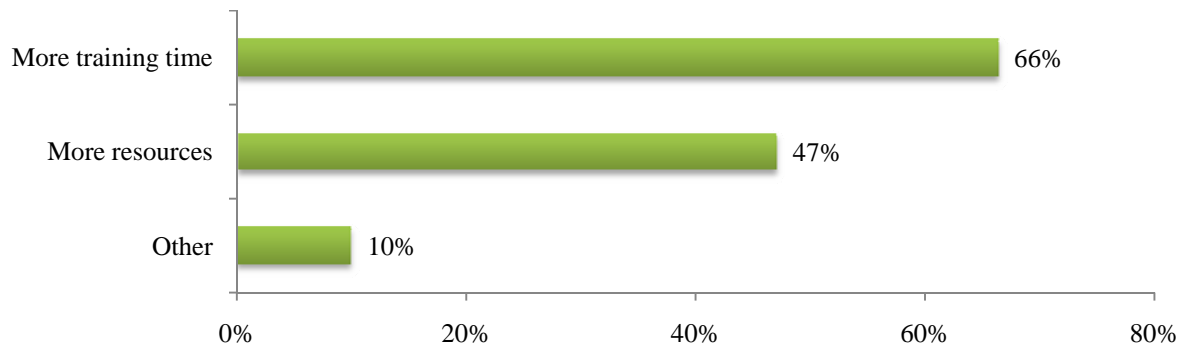
SOF Leader, USASOC

- Focusing FLPB on other modalities like speaking  
*“Allow OPI to be taken outright for FLPB without the gauntlet of the L/R DLPT V5.”*

SOF Leader, WARCOM

Figure 31. Other leader closed-ended item recommendations ( $n = 140$ )

*FLPB would be motivating if...*

Table 5. Leader open-ended recommendation themes for improving FLPB ( $n = 107$ )

Suggested Changes Content Themes	Unit Leaders	CLPM/ Lang. Office
<b>Changes to Training</b>		
More training time/opportunities	5	-
More immersion opportunities	3	-
More resources for training	2	1
Have dedicated training time	1	-
Other training suggestions	1	-
<b>Changes in Administrative Processes</b>		
Allow more people to qualify	3	-
Other administrative changes	2	1
Make administrative and application process easier	1	-
<b>Changes in Command Emphasis</b>		
Increase command emphasis	-	1
<b>Changes to the Test</b>		
Focus on different modalities	3	2
Change the test	1	-
Other testing suggestions	6	-

*Note.* Some comments contained multiple themes. Therefore, the total number of codes assigned may be greater than the total number of comments. See Appendix F for comment theme definitions and exemplar comments.

## SECTION VI: CONCLUSION

Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus (FLPB) is a skill-based pay system that is intended to motivate military personnel to learn and maintain language proficiency. This study asked SOF operators and leaders to comment on the motivating effect of FLPB. The majority of SOF operators (97%) were aware of FLPB; however, only 20% of those who reported being aware of the program were currently receiving the bonus. With such a low qualification rate for the program, it is essential to determine the extent to which FLPB motivates personnel as well as identify the factors that inhibit the effectiveness of the current FLPB policy for SOF personnel.

The low percentage of operators who qualify for FLPB may be attributable to several factors, including (1) training structure (e.g., language training time not sufficient to achieve minimum qualifications for FLPB), (2) the level of other duty requirements that constrains the available time for additional language training, (3) the number of deployments outside the unit's area of responsibility (AOR) which can interfere with maintaining the primary AOR language, and (4) FLPB policy misalignment with operational needs (e.g., may not incentivize the appropriate level of proficiency for the mission). Another reason may also be the level of language learning difficulty associated with the operator's assigned language, which can systematically impact entire units because of a unit's orientation to a specific AOR. For example, 7<sup>th</sup> SFG's AOR is South Command which is composed of countries where the least difficult languages for native English speakers to learn are spoken (e.g., Spanish), whereas other units may have a primary AORs where a more difficult to learn language is spoken (e.g., 5<sup>th</sup> SFG has Central Command and Arabic). In this context – where there are many constraints to learning and maintaining sufficient proficiency to qualify for FLPB – the structure and implementation of FLPB may not provide sufficient incentive to overcome the situational constraints. In this report, two areas were investigated for the effectiveness of the FLPB program: the extent to which FLPB is considered motivating and perceptions of fairness. Additional suggestions to improve the motivational value of FLPB were captured.

SOF operators and leaders were asked to rate the extent to which FLPB is motivating to acquire and/or maintain language skills. According to respondents, the motivation of FLPB to acquire and maintain language proficiency varies. Most SOF operators perceive FLPB as at least *slightly motivating* with 68% indicating FLPB is *moderately motivating to very motivating*. However, this degree of motivation varies for operators depending on their current receipt of FLPB, language difficulty of their assigned language, and the type of language training (i.e., self-study or structured training). These and other factors constrain the effectiveness of FLPB. Overall, FLPB is more motivating for SOF operators who are currently receiving FLPB and for those who are assigned to languages easier which are easier for native English speakers to learn (i.e., CAT I languages over CAT IV languages). Additionally, FLPB is more motivating while operators are in structured training compared to when they are required to attain/maintain language skills on their own. Leaders reported FLPB was more motivating than operators, with the majority reporting FLPB as at least *moderately motivating*. In addition to FLPB specifically, leaders were asked how motivating monetary incentives are. Results indicate that general monetary incentives are more motivating than FLPB; however, most unit leaders still described FLPB as between *motivating to very motivating*. These results suggest that FLPB can somewhat motivate language attainment and

maintenance, which is consistent with previous research on the Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP)<sup>7</sup> system (e.g., Dierdorff & Surface, 2008).

Previous research has shown a relationship between perceptions of fairness and motivation, such that those who perceive procedures as fairer are also more motivated (e.g., Zapata-Phelan, Colquitt, Scott, & Livingston, 2009). Procedural justice perceptions—whether are not the procedures for determining and allocating the bonus in this case—are important to perceptions of a policy’s fairness and satisfaction with the amount of incentive received. In the survey, two types of procedures were examined: allocating the payment amount of FLPB and determining the level of proficiency needed to be paid. Most SOF operators feel that both these procedures are *neither fair nor unfair*. However, they also provided higher fairness ratings for the procedures for allocating FLPB than the procedures for determining minimum proficiency levels required. As compared to operators, SOF leaders perceived greater procedural fairness in FLPB policy; however, they did not rate one type of FLPB procedure as fairer than the other.

While FLPB is perceived to be motivating for attaining and maintain language proficiency, there are still ways in which the program could be made more motivating. Respondents were given the opportunity to offer suggestions on how the program’s motivating potential could be enhanced. Most frequently, SOF operators and leaders suggested changes in the amount and structure of FLPB. Specifically, operators and leaders suggested that FLPB would more effective if the amount was increased and it was received at a lower proficiency level (most frequently reported was 1/1 by Army SOF operator participants). Research supports starting pay at a lower level, as SOF operators who receive FLPB in their first attempt following initial acquisition training are subsequently more likely to maintain and to increase proficiency (Dierdorff & Surface, 2008). Related to this suggestion, operators and leaders commonly recommended that more pay should be received to match the amount of work required to meet the requirements [i.e., the amount of work required should be equal to the rewards (see Adams, 1963)]. Considering the effort for other tasks that receive pay, language skill requires more time and work, yet language receives less pay in relation to the inputs required. According to respondents, increasing the amount of pay and lowering the required level to receive pay would help motivate SOF operators towards more language proficiency attainment. Other commonly suggested changes to the structure of FLPB included providing higher payment for proficiency in critical languages or languages with higher language difficulty categories (i.e., Arabic paid more than Spanish) and paying personnel for proficiency in multiple languages. Other recommendations provided by the SOF community included allowing more time for language training, increasing command emphasis on language training, and changing the test used to qualify for FLPB, as well as, simplifying the administrative process.

To summarize, SOF operators and leaders have suggested the following changes to improve FLPB from the closed-ended survey options: (1) increasing the amount of FLPB; (2) paying FLPB at lower levels of proficiency; (3) providing more time for language training, (4) paying for any two language modalities (e.g., speaking and listening vs. reading and listening), (5) requiring a higher proficiency level to be acquired during initial acquisition training, (6) increasing command emphasis on language, (7) allocating more resources for language learning, and (8) making administrative process easier to qualify for FLPB. Additional suggestions were suggested in the open-ended response items, such as paying the harder to

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<sup>7</sup> Foreign Language Proficiency Pay (FLPP) was the former incentive program before FLPB.

learn languages more than the easier to learn languages. Given all of these suggested FLPB improvements, the motivational value of FLPB for operators to acquire and maintain foreign language proficiency can likely be improved. Keeping in mind the practical constraints and other logistical reasons, not all of these suggestions may be appropriate or feasible for the entire community. These findings and perspectives will be combined with other information in the Tier II Report: *Incentives and Barriers*, which will present more comprehensive recommendations related to increasing the incentives and eliminating the barriers to maximize proficiency attainment and maintenance.

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### ABOUT SWA CONSULTING INC.

SWA Consulting Inc. (formerly Surface, Ward, and Associates) provides analytics and evidence-based solutions for clients using the principles and methods of industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology. Since 1997, SWA has advised and assisted corporate, non-profit and governmental clients on:

- Training and development
- Performance measurement and management
- Organizational effectiveness
- Test development and validation
- Program/training evaluation
- Work/job analysis
- Needs assessment
- Selection system design
- Study and analysis related to human capital issues
- Metric development and data collection
- Advanced data analysis

One specific practice area is analytics, research, and consulting on foreign language and culture in work contexts. In this area, SWA has conducted numerous projects, including language assessment validation and psychometric research; evaluations of language training, training tools, and job aids; language and culture focused needs assessments and job analysis; and advanced analysis of language research data.

Based in Raleigh, NC, and led by Drs. Eric A. Surface and Stephen J. Ward, SWA now employs close to twenty I/O professionals at the masters and PhD levels. SWA professionals are committed to providing clients the best data and analysis upon which to make evidence-based decisions. Taking a scientist-practitioner perspective, SWA professionals conduct model-based, evidence-driven research and consulting to provide the best answers and solutions to enhance our clients' mission and business objectives. SWA has competencies in measurement, data collection, analytics, data modeling, systematic reviews, validation, and evaluation.

For more information about SWA, our projects, and our capabilities, please visit our website ([www.swa-consulting.com](http://www.swa-consulting.com)) or contact Dr. Eric A. Surface ([esurface@swa-consulting.com](mailto:esurface@swa-consulting.com)) or Dr. Stephen J. Ward ([sward@swa-consulting.com](mailto:sward@swa-consulting.com)).

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## APPENDIX A: ABOUT THE LCNA PROJECT

In 2003-2004, the Special Operations Forces Language Office (SOFLO) sponsored the *SOF Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project* to inform the development of a language transformation strategy in response to a GAO report (2003). This *SOF Language Transformation Strategy Needs Assessment Project* collected current-state information about language usage, proficiency, training, and policy issues (e.g., Foreign Language Proficiency Pay, FLPP) from SOF personnel, SOF unit leaders, and other personnel involved in SOF language. The project used multiple data collection methods and provided the SOFLO with valid data to develop a comprehensive language transformation strategy and advocate for the SOF perspective on language issues within the DoD community.

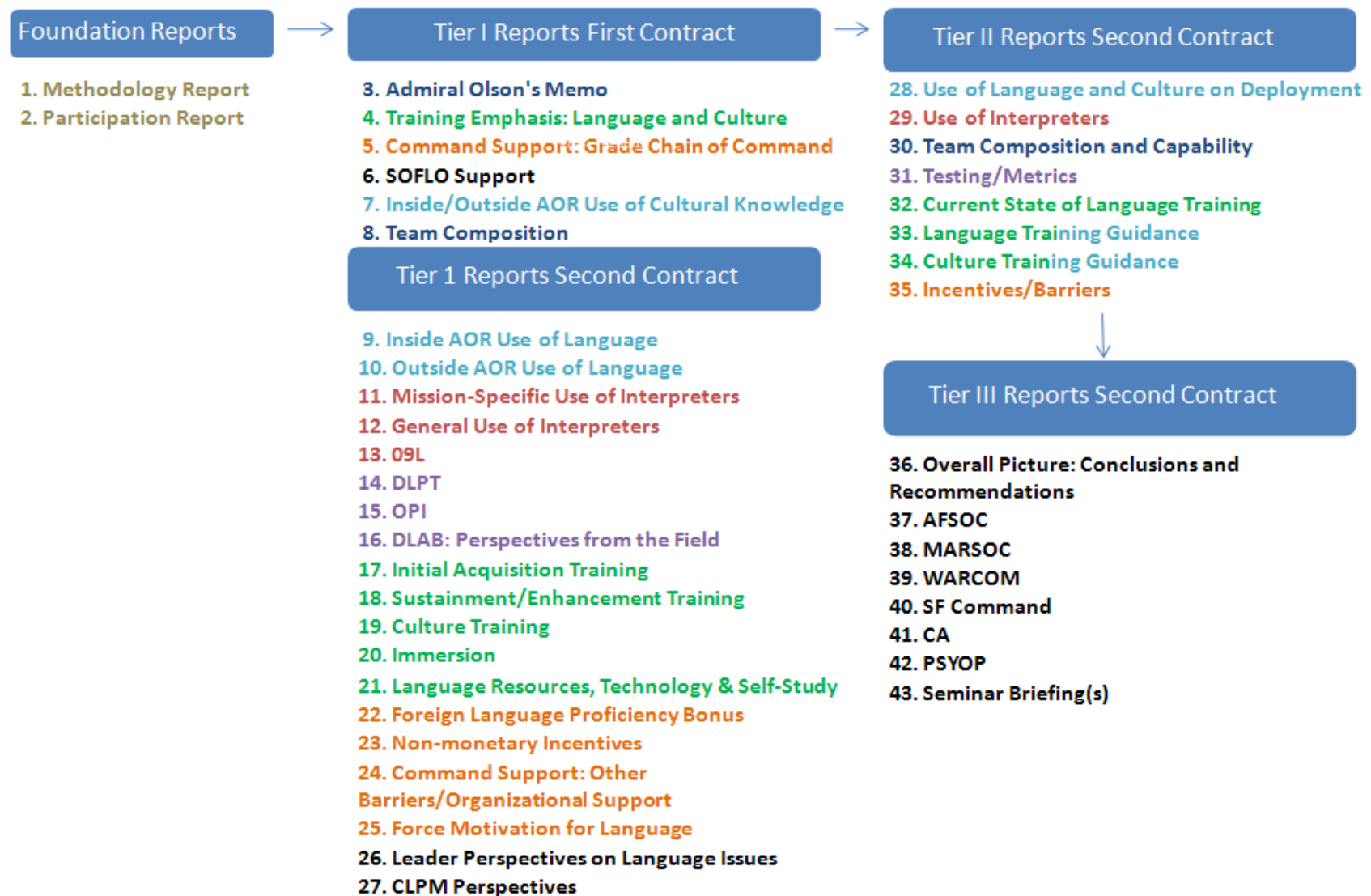
In a continuing effort to update knowledge of language and culture needs while informing strategic plan development, the SOFLO commissioned the *2009 SOF Language and Culture Needs Assessment Project* (LCNA) to reassess the language and culture landscape across the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and develop a strategy for the next five years. Data were collected between March and November, 2009 from personnel in the SOF community, including operators and leaders. Twenty-three focus groups were conducted between March and June, 2009. A comprehensive, web-based survey for SOF operators and leaders was launched on 26 October and closed on 24 November, 2009.

This project's findings will be disseminated through reports and briefings (see Appendix A, Figure 1). Two foundational reports document the methodology and participants associated with this project. The remaining reports are organized in three tiers. Twenty-five *Tier I* reports focus on specific, limited issues (e.g., *Inside AOR Use of Language*). *Tier II* reports integrate and present the most important findings across related *Tier I* reports (e.g., *Use of Language and Culture on Deployment*) while including additional data and analysis on the topic. Most, but not all, *Tier I* reports will roll into *Tier II* reports. One *Tier III* report presents the most important findings, implications, and recommendations across all topics explored in this project. The remaining *Tier III* reports present findings for specific SOF organizations [e.g., Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), Special Forces (SF) Command]. All *Tier III* reports are associated with a briefing. Report topics are determined by the SOFLO and subject to change.

In June, 2009, the GAO reported that the Department of Defense is making progress toward transforming language and regional proficiency capabilities but still does not have a strategic plan in place to continue development that includes actionable goals and objectives. The findings from this study can be used by the SOFLO and leaders at USSOCOM to continue strategic planning and development in this area.

This project design, logistics, data collection, initial analysis and first eight reports of this project were conducted by SWA Consulting Inc. (SWA) under a subcontract with SRC (SR20080668 (K142); Prime # N65236-08-D-6805). The additional reports are funded under a separate contracting vehicle with Gemini Industries Inc. [GEM02-ALMBOS-0018 (10210SWA-1); Prime # USZA22-02-D-0015]. For questions or more information about the SOFLO and this project, please contact Mr. Jack Donnelly ([john.donnelly@socom.mil](mailto:john.donnelly@socom.mil)). For specific questions related to data collection or reports associated with this project, please contact Dr. Eric A. Surface ([esurface@swa-consulting.com](mailto:esurface@swa-consulting.com)) or Dr. Reanna Poncheri Harman ([rpharman@swa-consulting.com](mailto:rpharman@swa-consulting.com)) with SWA Consulting Inc.

Appendix A, Figure 1. Report Overview



Note: Foundation reports are referenced by every other report. Colors represent Tier I reports that roll (integrate) into an associated Tier II report. Reports in black are final reports on the topic but may be cited by other reports. Tier II reports roll into the Tier III reports. All Tier III reports include an associated briefing.

## APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY

### Participants

#### *Focus Group Participants*

Twenty-three focus groups were conducted with 126 SOF personnel across the SOF community. Focus groups were conducted with AFSOC, MARSOC, WARCOM, and USASOC (see *Participation Report*, Technical Report #2010011003 for participant details). Verbatim comments and the frequencies of comment themes from these groups about FLPB policies and perceptions are integrated in Section V: SOF Community Recommendations (see *Methodology Report*, Technical Report #2010011002 for the focus group interview guide).

#### *Survey Participants and Branching*

Respondents received the SOF LCNA survey immersion training items if they indicated one of the following roles in the SOF community:

- SOF Operator (e.g., SEAL team member, SF team member, etc.)
- SOF Operator assigned to other duty
- MI Linguist or 09L assigned or attached to a SOF unit
- SOF Unit Commanders and Unit Leadership of O3 Commands or higher, including Staff, Support, and Specialists
- Command Language Program Manager or Component Language Program Manager (CLPMs)<sup>8</sup>
- Language Office Personnel<sup>8</sup>

Before operators were presented with the FLPB items, they were asked whether or not they were aware that military personnel can get paid for language proficiency (i.e., FLPB). There were 1017 operators (i.e., SOF operators and SOF operators assigned to other duties) who were aware of FLPB and answered the corresponding survey items. Most operator respondents were affiliated with the Army; however, the Marines, Air Force, and Navy were also represented.

Unit leaders were asked if they were in a position to comments on their unit's experiences with FLPB. There were 141 unit leaders who responded affirmatively. For more information on the participation and dropout rates, please refer to the *Participation Report* (Technical Report #2010011003).

### Measures

#### *Items*

Operators were asked the following about FLPB:

- Currently receiving FLPB
- FLPB as a motivator to acquire and/or maintain language proficiency
- Fairness of FLPB procedures
- Conditions that would make FLPB more motivating

Leaders were asked the following about FLPB:

- Ever received FLPB
- Currently receiving FLPB

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<sup>8</sup> CLPMs and Language Office Personnel were combined due to small sample size and presented in the tables for comparison to the Unit leaders

- Estimated percent of unit receiving FLPB
- FLPB as a motivator to maintain language proficiency
- Effectiveness of FLPB as an incentive
- Fairness of FLPB procedures
- Conditions that would make FLPB more motivating

Additionally, both operators and leaders received an open-ended item about making FLPB a more effective tool for promoting the maintenance and enhancement of language skill.

## **Analyses**

### *Closed-Ended Items*

















All closed-ended items were analyzed using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics. For each item, the frequencies for each response option are presented. The average (i.e., mean) response for each item is also presented. To compare responses across groups of participants, inferential statistics (e.g., analysis of variance, t-tests) were used to determine if any observed differences are likely to exist in the broader population of interest.

### *Open-Ended Items*

















To analyze the focus group data and open-ended items (survey comments), two coders created a content code (i.e., theme) list based on available responses. One coder coded all responses to the items, and the second coder coded a series of four sections equaling 30% of the total number of responses. Any disagreements between coders were discussed to agreement. The frequency of occurrence for each theme is presented in Section V of this report. For further details on these methods, please refer to the *Methodology Report* (Technical Report #2010011002).

## APPENDIX C. AWARENESS AND RECEIPT OF FLPB

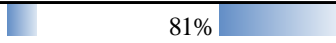

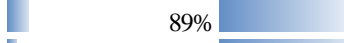
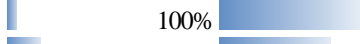

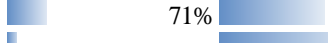
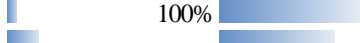
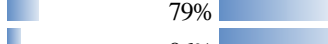
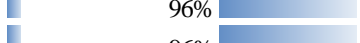
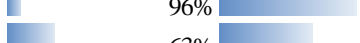
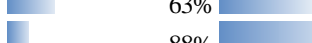
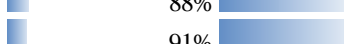
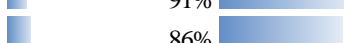
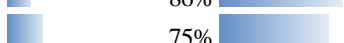
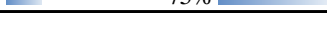
Appendix C, Table 1. Operator awareness of FLPB by component and Army SOF type

Group	n	Aware of FLPB	
		Yes	No
<b>All Operators</b>	1,048	97% 	3% 
<b>AFSOC</b>	19	100% 	0% 
<b>MARSOC</b>	12	92% 	8% 
<b>WARCOM</b>	8	100% 	0% 
<b>USASOC</b>	760	97% 	3% 
CA	150	97% 	3% 
PSYOP	126	95% 	5% 
SF	447	97% 	3% 

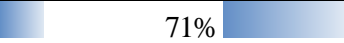
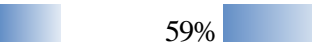
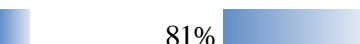
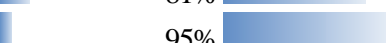
Appendix C, Table 2. Operator current receipt of FLPB by component and Army SOF type

Group	n	Currently Receiving FLPB	
		Yes	No
<b>All Operators</b>	1,010	20% 	80% 
<b>AFSOC</b>	19	32% 	68% 
<b>MARSOC</b>	11	36% 	64% 
<b>WARCOM</b>	8	25% 	75% 
<b>USASOC</b>	731	19% 	81% 
CA	146	29% 	71% 
PSYOP	120	23% 	77% 
SF	458	14% 	86% 

Appendix C, Table 3. Operator current receipt of FLPB by USASOC unit

Group	n	Currently Receiving FLPB	
		Yes	No
USASOC Overall	731	19% 	81%
USASOC HQ	6	50% 	50%
SWCS-Staff	18	11% 	89%
CA/PSYOP HQ	2	0% 	100%
4th POG	114	23% 	77%
95th CAB	139	29% 	71%
SF Command HQ	1	0% 	100%
1st SFG	68	21% 	79%
3rd SFG	76	4% 	96%
5th SFG	122	4% 	96%
7th SFG	84	37% 	63%
10th SFG	51	12% 	88%
19th SFG	11	9% 	91%
20th SFG	28	14% 	86%
Other	4	25% 	75%

Appendix C, Table 4. Operator current receipt of FLPB by language difficulty

Language Difficulty	n	Currently Receiving FLPB	
		Yes	No
Category I	385	29% 	71%
Category II	88	41% 	59%
Category III	165	19% 	81%
Category IV	282	5% 	95%

Appendix C, Table 5. Leaders ever receiving FLPB

Ever Received FLPB					
Group	<i>n</i>		Yes		No
All Unit Leaders	764	29%		71%	
AFSOC	3	33%		67%	
MARSOC	7	43%		57%	
WARCOM	3	100%		0%	
USASOC	538	28%		72%	
CA	77	39%		61%	
PSYOP	114	26%		74%	
SF	300	26%		74%	
CLPM/Lang. Office	12	58%		42%	

Note. "All Unit Leaders" includes USSOCOM HQ, WARCOM, MARSOC, JSOC/TSOC, Deployed SO Unit, and those that specified "other" when asked about their current assignment.

CLPM = Command Language Program Manager and Lang. Office = Language Office Personnel; these categories were combined because of small sample sizes (see Appendix B: Methodology).





























































Appendix C, Table 6. Leaders currently receiving FLPB

Currently Receiving FLPB					
Group	<i>n</i>		Yes		No
All Unit Leaders	224	55%		45%	
AFSOC	1	0%		100%	
MARSOC	3	100%		0%	
WARCOM	3	67%		33%	
USASOC	151	54%		46%	
CA	30	63%		37%	
PSYOP	30	60%		40%	
SF	78	53%		47%	
CLPM/Lang. Office	7	29%		71%	

Note. "All Unit Leaders" includes USSOCOM HQ, WARCOM, MARSOC, JSOC/TSOC, Deployed SO Unit, and those that specified "other" when asked about their current assignment.

CLPM = Command Language Program Manager, and Lang. Office = Language Office Personnel; these categories were combined because of small sample sizes (see Appendix B: Methodology).

**APPENDIX D: MOTIVATION AND EFFECTIVENESS TABLES***Appendix D, Table 1. Motivation to achieve FLPB on own by assignment*

FLPB Motivation: On Your Own								
Group	<i>n</i>	Mean	Not motivating	Slightly motivating	Moderately motivating	Motivating	Very motivating	
All Operators	989	2.97	20% 	18% 	24% 	20% 	17% 	
AFSOC	19	3.84	11% 	0% 	21% 	32% 	37% 	
WARCOM	7	3.29	14% 	14% 	29% 	14% 	29% 	
MARSOC	11	3.73	9% 	9% 	18% 	27% 	36% 	
USASOC	718	2.95	20% 	18% 	25% 	20% 	17% 	
CA	142	3.61 <sup>a</sup>	9% 	11% 	21% 	29% 	30% 	
PSYOP	118	3.07 <sup>b</sup>	16% 	17% 	30% 	19% 	19% 	
SF	451	2.72 <sup>c</sup>	25% 	21% 	24% 	19% 	12% 	
Group	<i>n</i>	Mean	Not motivating	Slightly motivating	Moderately motivating	Motivating	Very motivating	
All Operators	989	2.97 <sup>a</sup>	20% 	18% 	24% 	20% 	17% 	
Currently in Pipeline	78	3.51 <sup>b</sup>	5% 	15% 	26% 	31% 	23% 	
MI Linguist	48	3.48 <sup>ab</sup>	8% 	23% 	13% 	25% 	31% 	
09L	2	3.00 <sup>ab</sup>	0% 	50% 	0% 	50% 	0% 	

*Note.* Subgroups sharing the same letter (e.g., a or b) between Army SOF types (i.e., CA, PSYOP, SF) did not report significantly different motivation levels. Similarly, shared letters between comparing operators, pipeline, MI linguists, and 09Ls did not report significant different motivation levels. Subgroups NOT sharing the same letter between Army SOF types or operators and others, did report significantly motivation levels. Please refer to the mean to determine which group provided higher motivation ratings.

1 = Not motivating, 2 = Slightly motivating, 3 = Moderately motivating, 4 = Motivating, 5 = Very motivating

*Appendix D, Table 2. Operator motivation to achieved FLPB on own by difficulty category*

FLPB Motivation: On Your Own								
Language Difficulty	<i>n</i>	Mean	Not motivating	Slightly motivating	Moderately motivating	Motivating	Very motivating	
Category I	381	3.35 <sup>a</sup>	13%	13%	24%	24%	25%	
Category II	87	3.38 <sup>ab</sup>	9%	17%	20%	34%	20%	
Category III	161	2.94 <sup>b</sup>	19%	21%	24%	20%	16%	
Category IV	274	2.41 <sup>c</sup>	32%	22%	26%	12%	8%	

*Note.* Language category subgroups (e.g., Category I) sharing the same letter (e.g., a or b) did not report significantly different motivation levels. Subgroups NOT sharing the same letter did report significantly motivation levels. Please refer to the mean to determine which group provided higher motivation ratings.

1 = Not motivating, 2 = Slightly motivating, 3 = Moderately motivating, 4 = Motivating, 5 = Very motivating



Appendix D, Table 3. Unit leader perception of monetary incentives for operator

Motivation of Monetary Incentives									
Group	<i>n</i>	Mean	Not motivating	Slightly motivating	Moderately motivating	Motivating	Very motivating		
All Unit Leaders	770	3.93	2%	8%	20%	34%	36%		
AFSOC	8	3.38	0%	13%	50%	25%	13%		
MARSOC	20	3.75	0%	10%	20%	55%	15%		
WARCOM	11	3.73	0%	18%	27%	18%	36%		
USASOC	473	3.95	2%	8%	18%	34%	37%		
CA	60	4.08 <sup>ab</sup>	0%	7%	18%	35%	40%		
PSYOP	93	4.18 <sup>a</sup>	1%	4%	15%	34%	45%		
SF	245	3.87 <sup>b</sup>	3%	9%	21%	33%	34%		
CLPM/Lang. Office	25	3.84	4%	4%	24%	40%	28%		

Note. "All Unit Leaders" includes USSOCOM HQ, WARCOM, MARSOC, JSOC/TSOC, Deployed SO Unit, and those that specified "other" when asked about their current assignment.

CLPM = Command Language Program Manager, and Lang. Office = Language Office Personnel; these categories were combined because of small sample sizes (see Appendix B: Methodology).

Army SOF type subgroups sharing the same letter (e.g., a or b) did not report significantly different motivation levels. Subgroups NOT sharing the same letter did report significantly different motivation levels. Please refer to the mean to determine which group provided higher motivation ratings.

1 = Not motivating, 2 = Slightly motivating, 3 = Moderately motivating, 4 = Motivating, 5 = Very motivating

Appendix D, Table 4. Unit leader perception of FLPB effectiveness

FLPB Effectiveness								
Group	<i>n</i>	Mean	Not effective	Slightly effective	Moderately effective	Effective	Very effective	
All Unit Leaders	139	2.96	17%	17%	29%	26%	11%	
WARCOM	2	2.00	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%	
MARSOC	4	3.25	0%	0%	75%	25%	0%	
USASOC	91	2.95	20%	16%	26%	24%	13%	
CA	11	3.36 <sup>ab</sup>	9%	0%	45%	36%	9%	
PSYOP	19	3.74 <sup>a</sup>	5%	5%	26%	37%	26%	
SF	51	2.57 <sup>b</sup>	27%	24%	24%	16%	10%	
CLPM/Lang. Office	12	3.25	8%	17%	42%	8%	25%	

Note. FLPB effectiveness was only asked of leaders, and not of operators. There were no unit leaders from AFSOC who responded to this item. "All Unit Leaders" includes USSOCOM HQ, WARCOM, MARSOC, JSOC/TSOC, Deployed SO Unit, and those that specified "other" when asked about their current assignment.

CLPM = Command Language Program Manager and Lang. Office = Language Office Personnel; these categories were combined because of small sample sizes (see Appendix B: Methodology).

Army SOF type subgroups sharing the same letter (e.g., a or b) did not report significantly different effectiveness ratings. Subgroups NOT sharing the same letter did report significantly different effectiveness ratings. Please refer to the mean to determine which group provided higher or lower emphasis ratings.

1 = Not effective, 2 = Slightly effective, 3 = Moderately effective, 4 = Effective, 5 = Very effective

## APPENDIX E: FAIRNESS TABLES

Appendix E, Table 1. SOF operator vs. leader fairness procedure comparison

Item	Group	Fairness of FLPB Procedures			Unfair	Slightly unfair	Neither	Slightly fair	Fair
		<i>n</i>	Mean						
Allocating the amount of FLPB	Operator	983	3.26		8%	11%	49%	11%	21%
	Leader	139	3.53*		8%	15%	26%	19%	32%
Determining the required level to qualify for FLPB	Operator	982	3.16		11%	13%	46%	11%	19%
	Leader	139	3.37		11%	17%	23%	22%	27%

Note. Means with an asterisk (\*) indicate that the group gave significantly higher fairness ratings.

1 = Unfair, 2 = Slightly unfair, 3 = Neither, 4 = Slightly fair, 5 = Fair

Appendix E, Table 2. Comparing FLPB fairness perceptions within SOF operators and leaders

Group	Item	Fairness of FLPB Procedures			Unfair	Slightly unfair	Neither	Slightly fair	Fair
		<i>n</i>	Mean						
Operator	Allocating the amount of FLPB	983	3.26*		8%	11%	49%	11%	21%
	Determining the required level to qualify for FLPB	982	3.16		11%	13%	46%	11%	19%
Leader	Allocating the amount of FLPB	139	3.53		8%	15%	26%	19%	32%
	Determining the required level to qualify for FLPB	139	3.37		11%	17%	23%	22%	27%

Note. Means with an asterisk (\*) indicate that the group gave significantly higher fairness ratings.

1 = Unfair, 2 = Slightly unfair, 3 = Neither, 4 = Slightly fair, 5 = Fair

Appendix E, Table 3. SOF operator fairness perceptions in allocating amount of pay by component

FLPB Fairness in Allocating Amount								
Group	<i>n</i>	Mean	Unfair	Slightly unfair	Neither	Slightly fair	Fair	
All Operators	983	3.26	8% <div><div></div></div>	11% <div><div></div></div>	49% <div><div></div></div>	11% <div><div></div></div>	21% <div><div></div></div>	
AFSOC	19	3.63	5% <div><div></div></div>	11% <div><div></div></div>	42% <div><div></div></div>	0% <div><div></div></div>	42% <div><div></div></div>	
WARCOM	7	3.57	0% <div><div></div></div>	0% <div><div></div></div>	71% <div><div></div></div>	0% <div><div></div></div>	29% <div><div></div></div>	
MARSOC	11	3.46	0% <div><div></div></div>	27% <div><div></div></div>	36% <div><div></div></div>	0% <div><div></div></div>	36% <div><div></div></div>	
USASOC	713	3.27	8% <div><div></div></div>	11% <div><div></div></div>	49% <div><div></div></div>	12% <div><div></div></div>	21% <div><div></div></div>	
CA	140	3.59 <sup>a</sup>	5% <div><div></div></div>	6% <div><div></div></div>	43% <div><div></div></div>	16% <div><div></div></div>	29% <div><div></div></div>	
PSYOP	116	3.25 <sup>ab</sup>	5% <div><div></div></div>	16% <div><div></div></div>	47% <div><div></div></div>	15% <div><div></div></div>	18% <div><div></div></div>	
SF	450	3.17 <sup>b</sup>	9% <div><div></div></div>	12% <div><div></div></div>	51% <div><div></div></div>	9% <div><div></div></div>	19% <div><div></div></div>	

Note. Army SOF type subgroups sharing the same letter (e.g., a or b) did not report significantly different fairness perception. Subgroups NOT sharing the same letter did report significantly different fairness perceptions. Please refer to the mean to determine which group provided higher fairness ratings. 1 = *Unfair*, 2 = *Slightly unfair*, 3 = *Neither*, 4 = *Slightly fair*, 5 = *Fair*

Appendix E, Table 4. SOF operator fairness perceptions in determining level of proficiency for pay by component

FLPB Fairness in Determining the Required Level for Pay								
Group	<i>n</i>	Mean	Unfair	Slightly unfair	Neither	Slightly fair	Fair	
All Operators	982	3.16	11%	13%	46%	11%	19%	
AFSOC	19	3.74	5%	5%	42%	5%	42%	
WARCOM	7	3.43	0%	14%	57%	0%	29%	
MARSOC	11	3.64	0%	18%	36%	9%	36%	
USASOC	712	3.17	11%	12%	46%	12%	20%	
CA	140	3.55 <sup>a</sup>	6%	7%	41%	15%	30%	
PSYOP	115	3.22 <sup>ab</sup>	9%	10%	48%	17%	17%	
SF	450	3.04 <sup>b</sup>	13%	14%	47%	9%	17%	

Note. Army SOF type subgroups sharing the same letter (e.g., a or b) did not report significantly different fairness perception. Subgroups NOT sharing the same letter did report significantly different fairness perceptions. Please refer to the mean to determine which group provided higher fairness ratings. 1 = *Unfair*, 2 = *Slightly unfair*, 3 = *Neither*, 4 = *Slightly fair*, 5 = *Fair*

Appendix E, Table 5. SOF operator fairness perceptions in allocating amount of pay by USASOC Unit

FLPB Fairness in Allocating Amount							
Group	<i>n</i>	Mean	Unfair	Slightly unfair	Neither	Slightly fair	Fair
<b>USASOC</b>	713	3.27 <sup>ab</sup>	8%	11%	49%	12%	21%
<b>USASOC HQ</b>	6	4.00 <sup>ab</sup>	0%	0%	50%	0%	50%
<b>SWCS-Staff</b>	18	3.28 <sup>ab</sup>	17%	6%	44%	0%	33%
<b>CA/PSYOP HQ</b>	2	3.00 <sup>ab</sup>	50%	0%	0%	0%	50%
<b>4th POG</b>	110	3.23 <sup>ab</sup>	5%	16%	47%	15%	16%
<b>95th CAB</b>	133	3.56 <sup>a</sup>	5%	6%	44%	17%	28%
<b>1st SFG</b>	67	3.08 <sup>ab</sup>	10%	16%	48%	6%	19%
<b>3rd SFG</b>	77	3.18 <sup>ab</sup>	6%	8%	61%	10%	14%
<b>5th SFG</b>	117	3.03 <sup>b</sup>	9%	14%	58%	5%	15%
<b>7th SFG</b>	83	3.40 <sup>ab</sup>	10%	8%	41%	14%	27%
<b>10th SFG</b>	50	3.04 <sup>ab</sup>	14%	14%	46%	6%	20%
<b>19th SFG</b>	11	3.09 <sup>ab</sup>	18%	18%	27%	9%	27%
<b>20th SFG</b>	28	3.39 <sup>ab</sup>	0%	11%	57%	14%	18%
<b>Other</b>	4	4.25 <sup>ab</sup>	0%	0%	25%	25%	50%

Note. No SF Command HQ operators responded to this question.

Subgroups sharing the same letter (e.g., a or b) did not report significantly different fairness perception. Subgroups NOT sharing the same letter did report significantly different fairness perceptions. Please refer to the mean to determine which group provided higher fairness ratings.

1 = *Unfair*, 2 = *Slightly unfair*, 3 = *Neither*, 4 = *Slightly fair*, 5 = *Fair*

Appendix E, Table 6. SOF operator fairness perceptions in determining level of proficiency for pay by USASOC Unit

Group	n	Mean	Unfair	Slightly unfair	Neither	Slightly fair	Fair
USASOC	712	3.17 <sup>ab</sup>	11%	12%	46%	12%	20%
USASOC HQ	6	3.33 <sup>ab</sup>	17%	0%	50%	0%	33%
SWCS-Staff	18	3.11 <sup>ab</sup>	22%	0%	44%	11%	22%
CA/PSYOP HQ	2	3.00 <sup>ab</sup>	50%	0%	0%	0%	50%
4th POG	109	3.21 <sup>ab</sup>	8%	11%	49%	16%	17%
95th CAB	133	3.55 <sup>a</sup>	6%	8%	41%	16%	29%
1st SFG	67	3.08 <sup>ab</sup>	10%	16%	48%	6%	19%
3rd SFG	77	3.08 <sup>ab</sup>	9%	9%	58%	12%	12%
5th SFG	117	2.92 <sup>b</sup>	15%	12%	56%	3%	15%
7th SFG	83	3.11 <sup>ab</sup>	16%	17%	29%	18%	20%
10th SFG	50	2.96 <sup>ab</sup>	10%	24%	42%	8%	16%
19th SFG	11	3.18 <sup>ab</sup>	18%	9%	36%	9%	27%
20th SFG	28	3.14 <sup>ab</sup>	7%	21%	43%	7%	21%
Other	4	4.25 <sup>ab</sup>	0%	0%	25%	25%	50%

Note. No SF Command HQ operators responded to this question.

Subgroups sharing the same letter (e.g., a or b) did not report significantly different fairness perception. Subgroups NOT sharing the same letter did report significantly different fairness perceptions. Please refer to the mean to determine which group provided higher fairness ratings.

1 = Unfair, 2 = Slightly unfair, 3 = Neither, 4 = Slightly fair, 5 = Fair

Appendix E, Table 7. Operator fairness perceptions in allocating amount of pay by component by language difficulty

Group	n	Mean	Unfair	Slightly unfair	Neither	Slightly fair	Fair
Category I	377	3.41 <sup>a</sup>	7%	6%	49%	14%	24%
Category II	88	3.49 <sup>a</sup>	6%	13%	40%	11%	31%
Category III	161	3.34 <sup>a</sup>	4%	11%	52%	12%	20%
Category IV	271	2.95 <sup>b</sup>	12%	17%	49%	8%	14%

Note. Subgroups sharing the same letter (e.g., a or b) did not report significantly different fairness perception. Subgroups NOT sharing the same letter did report significantly different fairness perceptions. Please refer to the mean to determine which group provided higher fairness ratings.

1 = Unfair, 2 = Slightly fair, 3 = Neither, 4 = Slightly fair, 5 = Fair

Appendix E, Table 8. SOF operator fairness perceptions in determining level of proficiency for pay by component by language difficulty

FLPB Fairness in Determining the Required Level for Pay									
Group	<i>n</i>	Mean	Unfair	Slightly unfair	Neither	Slightly fair	Fair		
Category I	376	3.27 <sup>a</sup>	11% <div><div></div></div>	10% <div><div></div></div>	43% <div><div></div></div>	13% <div><div></div></div>	23% <div><div></div></div>		
Category II	88	3.58 <sup>a</sup>	5% <div><div></div></div>	9% <div><div></div></div>	42% <div><div></div></div>	13% <div><div></div></div>	32% <div><div></div></div>		
Category III	161	3.27 <sup>a</sup>	8% <div><div></div></div>	11% <div><div></div></div>	48% <div><div></div></div>	12% <div><div></div></div>	21% <div><div></div></div>		
Category IV	271	2.79 <sup>b</sup>	16% <div><div></div></div>	18% <div><div></div></div>	48% <div><div></div></div>	8% <div><div></div></div>	10% <div><div></div></div>		

Note. Language difficulty category subgroups sharing the same letter (e.g., a or b) did not report significantly different fairness perception. Subgroups NOT sharing the same letter did report significantly different fairness perceptions. Please refer to the mean to determine which group provided higher fairness ratings. 1 = *Unfair*, 2 = *Slightly unfair*, 3 = *Neither*, 4 = *Slightly fair*, 5 = *Fair*

Appendix E, Table 9. Unit leader fairness perceptions in allocating amount of pay by component

FLPB Fairness in Allocating Amount								
Group	<i>n</i>	Mean	Unfair	Slightly unfair	Neither	Slightly fair	Fair	
All Unit Leaders	139	3.53	8% <div><div></div></div>	15% <div><div></div></div>	26% <div><div></div></div>	19% <div><div></div></div>	32% <div><div></div></div>	
WARCOM	2	3.50	0% <div><div></div></div>	50% <div><div></div></div>	0% <div><div></div></div>	0% <div><div></div></div>	50% <div><div></div></div>	
MARSOC	4	4.00	0% <div><div></div></div>	25% <div><div></div></div>	0% <div><div></div></div>	25% <div><div></div></div>	50% <div><div></div></div>	
USASOC	91	3.45	10% <div><div></div></div>	14% <div><div></div></div>	27% <div><div></div></div>	18% <div><div></div></div>	31% <div><div></div></div>	
CA	11	3.27	9% <div><div></div></div>	27% <div><div></div></div>	18% <div><div></div></div>	18% <div><div></div></div>	27% <div><div></div></div>	
PSYOP	19	3.42	5% <div><div></div></div>	21% <div><div></div></div>	32% <div><div></div></div>	11% <div><div></div></div>	32% <div><div></div></div>	
SF	51	3.43	12% <div><div></div></div>	8% <div><div></div></div>	33% <div><div></div></div>	20% <div><div></div></div>	27% <div><div></div></div>	
CLPM/Lang. Office	12	3.67	17% <div><div></div></div>	8% <div><div></div></div>	8% <div><div></div></div>	25% <div><div></div></div>	42% <div><div></div></div>	

Note. There were no unit leaders from AFSOC who responded to this item.

"All Unit Leaders" includes USSOCOM HQ, WARCOM, MARSOC, JSOC/TSOC, Deployed SO Unit, and those that specified "other" when asked about their current assignment.

CLPM = Command Language Program Manager and Lang. Office = Language Office Personnel; these categories were combined because of small sample sizes (see Appendix B: Methodology).

There were no significant differences between groups.

1 = *Unfair*, 2 = *Slightly unfair*, 3 = *Neither*, 4 = *Slightly fair*, 5 = *Fair*

*Appendix E, Table 10. Unit leader fairness perceptions in determining level of proficiency for pay by component*

FLPB Fairness in Determining the Required Level for Pay									
Group	<i>n</i>	Mean	Unfair	Slightly unfair	Neither	Slightly fair	Fair		
All Unit Leaders	139	3.37	11%	17%	23%	22%	27%		
WARCOM	2	3.00	50%	0%	0%	0%	50%		
MARSOC	4	4.50	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%		
USASOC	91	3.23	12%	19%	27%	18%	24%		
CA	11	3.55	9%	18%	18%	18%	36%		
PSYOP	19	3.53	5%	11%	42%	11%	32%		
SF	51	2.98	18%	18%	29%	20%	16%		
CLPM/Lang. Office	12	3.00	25%	17%	25%	0%	33%		

*Note.* There were no unit leaders from AFSOC who responded to this item.

“All Unit Leaders” includes USSOCOM HQ, WARCOM, MARSOC, JSOC/TSOC, Deployed SO Unit, and those that specified “other” when asked about their current assignment.

CLPM = Command Language Program Manager and Lang. Office = Language Office Personnel; these categories were combined because of small sample sizes (see Appendix B: Methodology).

There were no significant differences between groups.

1 = *Unfair*, 2 = *Slightly unfair*, 3 = *Neither*, 4 = *Slightly fair*, 5 = *Fair*

## APPENDIX F: OPEN-ENDED COMMENT THEME DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES

SOF operators and SOF leaders were given the opportunity to provide comments in response to the following prompt:

- *What one thing would you change to make FLPB a more effective tool for promoting the maintenance and enhancement of language skill?*

All comments were content analyzed and common themes extracted. The resulting themes are provided below, with a definition of each theme and verbatim exemplar comments that illustrate the theme. For more information about this study's content analysis process, please refer to the *LCNA Methodology Report* (Technical Report # 2010011002).

Note: Exemplar comments are presented verbatim and are uncorrected for spelling and other mistakes.

### Changes from leadership/administrative

- Increase command emphasis
  - Definition: Increase command emphasis or involvement on language proficiency skills
    - "Leadership involvement and endorsement of it as a critical skill set."
- Make admin easier/easier application process
  - Definition: Administrative processes or the application process associated with FLPB should be made easier
    - "provide enough information in a user friendly manner. The main problem with the bonus is the lack of information out there and how to process the bonuses. Soldiers become upset when they know the bonus is available but unit members do not know how to process the bonuses correctly"
- Allow more people to qualify (e.g., other positions, grade types, units, MOSs)
  - Definition: Less restrictions on who should be able to qualify for FLPB
    - "Not restrict it to specific jobs and MOS's"
- Other leadership/administrative changes
  - Definition: Leadership or administrative changes not otherwise specified in the previous codes
    - "My unit has a difficult time getting us paid, even after we take the test and score high enough to get paid."

### Changes to training

- Improve quality of training
  - Definition: The quality of foreign language training should be increased
    - "provide HIGH QUALITY intitial language training."
- Use DLI to train
  - Definition: Personnel should receive training at the Defense Language Institute (DLI), or DLI should serve as a model for other foreign language training programs
    - "Full length initial training--DLI standard."
- Have dedicated training time



- Definition: Time should be dedicated to foreign language training, or protected from other requirements that generally pull personnel out of language training
    - “Allocate more dedicated time to maintaining language proficiency.”
- More training time/opportunities
  - Definition: Provided more time for foreign language training or opportunities to participate in language training
    - “Allow those with the desire more time to become proficient.”
- More resources for training
  - Definition: Provide more resources for foreign language training
    - “I don't believe it is a reasonable goal without the resources of a language school/lab and fluent instructors.”
- More immersion opportunities
  - Definition: Provided with more opportunities to participate in immersion training
    - “More immersion availabilities to enhance speaking and listening capabilities.”
- Other training suggestions
  - Definition: Foreign language training suggestions not otherwise specified in the previous training codes
    - “Initial language training to a higher proficiency standard.”

**Changes in pay**

- Increase amount
  - Definition: Increase the amount of money associated with FLPB pay levels
    - “I think for this to have any effect at all on guys desires to maintain or improve their language ability that amounts paid would have to increase dramatically.”
- Receive pay at the lower levels
  - Definition: Pay should be received at lower proficiency levels
    - “give incentives to be proficient at lower levels. Since it is very difficult to be proficient enough to receive payment under the current standards, many have no motivation to try to strive to reach it. It is a bridge too far.”
- Harder/critical languages should be paid more
  - Definition: Increase the amount of money for the more difficult or critical languages
    - “Pay more money for critical languages/difficult languages. It makes zero sense that we pay a 3/3 Spanish linguist the same as a 3/3 Arabic linguist. A 3/3 Spanish linguist is a dime a dozen. A 3/3 Arabic linguist is probably one in 500,000 and very few people in the US have the aptitude to get to that level. We need to recognize that and pay for it. Not all languages are created equal and we have more need for some languages than others.”
- All languages should receive the same pay
  - Definition: Provide equal amounts of money for all languages
    - “Flat rate per ability and language... shouldn't matter what language you speak to get the same \$.”
- Pay should be for newly learned languages (not native speakers)

- Definition: FLPB should be paid only to those who recently acquired foreign language proficiency
  - “FLPB needs to be fair! The soldiers that had to learn the language versus the Native speaker. Learning a language requires dedication and lots of time which include personal and professional time. during the course free time is manage where someone who grow up speaking the langauge entered the army with that capability. FLPB should be paid if a new langauge.”
- Receive pay for each skill (L, R, S)
  - Definition: FLPB payment should be given for each foreign language skill (i.e., listening, reading, speaking)
    - “Set a monetary amount for each of the skills ie: speaking, listening and reading and then for combinations of the three. I can read but not speak or understand the spoken word of several languages, however, I don't qualify for any FLPB.”
- Higher levels should be paid more
  - Definition: Increase the amount of money for higher proficiency levels
    - “Pay more for levels above 3/3.”
- Bonuses for sustaining levels for a period of time
  - Definition: Bonuses should be associated with FLPB pay for those that maintain proficiency for an extended amount of time
    - “look at targeted language bonuses for those that maintain 2/2 and 3/3 language ratings consistantly for two years or more.”
- Receive pay for multiple languages
  - Definition: Payment should be provided for every language an individual attains proficiency
    - “That we would get paid per language. I use to get paid for three languages now I only recieve pay for one. So I'm not intrested in maintaining my proficiency in the other languages. There is no incentive.”
- Lump sum payment
  - Definition: Payment should be provided in a lump sum
    - “Lump sum payouts for qualifying scores.”
- Make payment standard across components/Services
  - Definition: FLPB payment should be standard across components and/or Services
    - “ensure that all branches of SOF are recieving similar pay. (perception is that NAVSOF recieves much higer bonuses & incentive pay than ARSOF)”
- Other pay changes
  - Definition: Pay changes not otherwise specified in the previous pay codes
    - “increase the number of steps (e.g. \$50 increments at smaller proficiency intervals).”

### Language-related changes

- Be able to pick language
  - Definition: Ability to choose the language that will be trained

- “Let the Soldiers being trained have some say in what language they are going to be trained in. I did not want to learn Polish, I never worked with Polish Soldiers and so was never interested in maintaining proficiency. Russian, Spanish, German might have had different results.”
- Other language suggestions
  - Definition: Language suggestions not otherwise specified in the previous language code
    - “Realizing that the language desired will not be the language desired tomorrow.”

### Changes to the test

- Change the test (i.e., don’t use the DLPT V)
  - Definition: Change the test that is used to qualify operators for FLPB
    - “Get rid of the DLPT V and give soldiers a fair test. If you give them a reasonable test then they will be more motivated to study. If you keep the DLPT V, which is nearly impossible for students to master, even after years of study and immersion, then everyone will give up trying to obtain FLPB.”
- Focus on different modalities (i.e., speaking or the OPI)
  - Definition: Use a test that focuses on a different modality like speaking
    - “Change to a listening and speaking test rather than a reading and listening test.”
- Make the tests more job related
  - Definition: Change the test to be more job-related
    - “make the OPI and DLPT more job specific based. if my job is to build rapport with local soldiers and conduct missions in the field with them, I should be tested on THAT vocabulary. not my ability to buy a hotel room in a foreign country”
- Other testing suggestions
  - Definition: Testing suggestions not otherwise specified in the previous testing codes
    - “Testing - a five hour test is too long - I fall asleep or lose track of parts of the test because it is so boring and long!”

### Other suggestions

- Provide other types of incentives (promotion, immersion)
  - Definition: Provide other types of incentives instead of money
    - “More incentive to attend college for credit and enhance language skills.”
- No changes
  - Definition: Changes to the current FLPB program are not needed
    - “I think the current incentives are good”

### Barriers to achieving proficiency

- Definition: Indicates that FLPB doesn’t need to be improved and that other barriers are present that create a problem in achieving language proficiency
  - “THE NUMBER OF REQUIREMENTS WE MUST ALSO MEET OVERWHELMS THE CALENDAR.”

### Not relevant

- Definition: Comments not related to FLPB

- “I’m impressed that you basically already knew what i was thinking...”

**Other (or FLPB is not motivating with no reason provided)**

- Definition: Other reason not specified in the previous codes
  - “FLPB does not motivate me.”